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The Heimskringla

A HISTORY OF

THE NORSE KINGS

BY

SNORRE STURLASON

TRANSLATED FROM THE ICELANDIC

BY

SAMUEL LAING, Esq.

WITH A PREFACE AND NOTES

BY

HON. RASMUS B. ANDERSON.

VOL. I.

PUBLISHED BY THE

NORRŒNA SOCIETY,

LONDON COPENHAGEN STOCKHOLM BERLIN NEW YORK

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VALDEMAR II. RECEIVING DAGMAR AT RIBE, 1205.

(From a painting by Th. Wegener.)

VALDEMAR II., known as the Victorious, was first married to Margrete of Bohemia, whom the Danes afterwards, in their admiration of her gentleness and beauty, called Dagmar, which signifies "Day's Maiden." So great a favorite was she with the people that the fame of her virtues was celebrated in their national ballads, "the Kæmpeviser." It was for many years believed that from her tomb in Ringstead Abbey issued at midnight the softest strains of heavenly music. The illustration represents her reception as Valdemar's bride and welcome to Denmark by the people.

See page 143.

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THE HEIMSKRINGLA;

OR,

CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY.

PREFACE OF SNORRE STURLASON.

In this book I have had old stories written down, as I have heard them told by intelligent people, concerning chiefs who have held dominion in the northern countries, and who spoke the Danish tongue; and also concerning some of their family branches, according to what has been told me. Some of this is found in ancient family registers, in which the pedigrees of kings and other personages of high birth are reckoned up, and part is written down after old songs and ballads which our forefathers had for their amusement. Now, although we cannot just say what truth there may be in these, yet we have the certainty that old and wise men held them to be true.

Thjodolf of Hvin was the skald of Harald Harfager, and he composed a poem for King Rognvald the Mountain-high, which is called "Ynglingatal." This Rognvald was a son of Olaf Geirstadaalf, the brother of King Halfdan the Black. In this poem thirty of his forefathers are

reckoned up, and the death and burial-place of each are given. He begins with Fjolner, a son of Yngvefrey, whom the Swedes, long after his time, worshipped and sacrificed to, and from whom the race or family of the Ynglings take their name.

Eyvind Skaldaspiller also reckoned up the ancestors of Earl Hakon the Great in a poem called "Haleygjatal," composed about Hakon; and therein he mentions Sæming, a son of Yngvefrey, and he likewise tells of the death and funeral rites of each. The lives and times of the Yngling race were written from Thjodolf's relation enlarged afterwards by the accounts of intelligent people.

As to funeral rites, the earliest age is called the Age of Burning; because all the dead were consumed by fire, and over their ashes were raised standing stones. But after Frey was buried under a cairn at Upsala, many chiefs raised cairns, as commonly as stones, to the memory of their relatives.

The Age of Cairns began properly in Denmark after Dan Milkillate had raised for himself a burial-cairn, and ordered that he should be buried in it on his death, with his royal ornaments and armour, his horse and saddle-furniture, and other valuable goods; and many of his descendants followed his example. But the burning of the dead continued, long after that time, to be the custom of the Swedes and Northmen. Iceland was occupied in the time that Harald Harfager was the King of Norway. There were skalds in Harald's court whose poems the people know by heart even at the present day, together with all the songs about the kings who have

ruled in Norway since his time; and we rest the foundations of our story principally upon the songs which were sung in the presence of the chiefs themselves or of their sons, and take all to be true that is found in such poems about their feats and battles: for although it be the fashion with skalds to praise most those in whose presence they are standing, yet no one would dare to relate to a chief what he, and all those who heard it, knew to be a false and imaginary, not a true account of his deeds; because that would be mockery, not praise.

OF THE PRIEST ARE FRODE.

The priest Are Frode (the learned), a son of Thorgils the son of Geller, was the first man in this country who wrote down in the Norse language narratives of events both old and new. In the beginning of his book he wrote principally about the first settlements in Iceland, the laws and government, and next of the lagmen, and how long each had administered the law; and he reckoned the years at first, until the time when Christianity was introduced into Iceland, and afterwards reckoned from that to his own times. To this he added many other subjects, such as the lives and times of kings of Norway and Denmark, and also of England; besides accounts of great events which have taken place in this country itself. His narratives are considered by many men of knowledge to be the most remarkable of all; because he was a man of good understanding, and so old that his birth was as far back as the year after Harald

Sigurdson's fall. He wrote, as he himself says, the lives and times of the kings of Norway from the report of Od Kolson, a grandson of Hal of Sida. Od again took his information from Thorgeir Afradskol, who was an intelligent man, and so old that when Earl Hakon the Great was killed he was dwelling at Nidarnes—the same place at which King Olaf Trygvason afterwards laid the foundation of the merchant town of Nidaros (*i. e.* Throndhjem) which is now there. The priest Are came, when seven years old, to Haukadal to Hal Thorarinson, and was there fourteen years. Hal was a man of great knowledge and of excellent memory; and he could even remember being baptized, when he was three years old, by the priest Thangbrand, the year before Christianity was established by law in Iceland. Are was twelve years of age when Bishop Isleif died, and at his death eighty years had elapsed since the fall of Olaf Trygvason. Hal died nine years later than Bishop Isleif, and had attained nearly the age of ninety-four years. Hal had traded between the two countries, and had enjoyed intercourse with King Olaf the Saint, by which he had gained greatly in reputation, and he had become well acquainted with the kingdom of Norway. He had fixed his residence in Haukadal when he was thirty years of age, and he had dwelt there sixty-four years, as Are tells us. Teit, a son of Bishop Isleif, was fostered in the house of Hal at Haukadal, and afterwards dwelt there himself. He taught Are the priest, and gave him information about many circumstances which Are afterwards wrote down. Are also got many a piece of information from Thurid,

a daughter of the gode Snorre. She was wise and intelligent, and remembered her father Snorre, who was nearly thirty-five years of age when Christianity was introduced into Iceland, and died a year after King Olaf the Saint's fall. So it is not wonderful that Are the priest had good information about ancient events both here in Iceland, and abroad, being a man anxious for information, intelligent and of excellent memory, and having besides learned much from old intelligent persons. But the songs seem to me most reliable if they are sung correctly, and judiciously interpreted.

HALFDAN THE BLACK SAGA.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Of this saga there are other versions found in *Fagrskinna* and in *Flateyjarbok*. The *Flateyjarbok* version is to a great extent a copy of Snorre. The story about Halfdan's dream is found both in *Fagrskinna* and in *Flateyjarbok*. The probability is that both Snorre and the author of *Fagrskinna* must have transcribed the same original text.—*Ed.*

1.—HALFDAN FIGHTS WITH GANDALF AND SIGTRYG.

HALFDAN was a year old when his father was killed, and his mother Asa set off immediately with him westwards to Agder, and set herself there in the kingdom which her father Harald had possessed. Halfdan grew up there, and soon became stout and strong; and, by reason of his black hair, was called Halfdan the Black. When he was eighteen years old he took his kingdom in Agder, and went immediately to Vestfold, where he divided that kingdom, as before related, with his brother Olaf. The same autumn he went with an army to Vingulmark against King Gandalf. They had many battles, and sometimes one, sometimes the other gained the victory; but at last they agreed that Halfdan should have half of Vingulmark, as his father Gudrod had had it before. Then King Halfdan proceeded to Raumarike, and subdued it. King Sigtryg, son of King Eystein, who then had his residence in Hedemark, and who had sub-

dued Raumarike before, having heard of this, came out with his army against King Halfdan, and there was a great battle, in which King Halfdan was victorious; and just as King Sigtryg and his troops were turning about to fly, an arrow struck him under the left arm, and he fell dead. Halfdan then laid the whole of Raumarike under his power. King Eystein's second son, King Sigtryg's brother, was also called Eystein, and was then king in Hedemark. As soon as Halfdan had returned to Vestfold, King Eystein went out with his army to Raumarike, and laid the whole country in subjection to him.

2.—BATTLE BETWEEN HALFDAN AND EYSTEIN.

When King Halfdan heard of these disturbances in Raumarike, he again gathered his army together; and went out against King Eystein. A battle took place between them, and Halfdan gained the victory, and Eystein fled up to Hedemark, pursued by Halfdan. Another battle took place, in which Halfdan was again victorious; and Eystein fled northwards, up into the Dales to the herse Gudbrand. There he was strengthened with new people, and in winter he went towards Hedemark, and met Halfdan the Black upon a large island which lies in the Mjosen lake. There a great battle was fought, and many people on both sides were slain, but Halfdan won the victory. There fell Guthorm, the son of the herse Gudbrand, who was one of the finest men in the Uplands. Then Eystein fled north up the valley, and sent his relation Halvard Skalk to King Halfdan to beg

for peace. On consideration of their relationship, King Halfdan gave King Eystein half of Hedemark, which he and his relations had held before; but kept to himself Thoten, and the district called Land. He likewise appropriated to himself Hadeland, and thus became a mighty king.

3.—HALFDAN'S MARRIAGE.

Halfdan the Black got a wife called Ragnhild, a daughter of Harald Gulskeg (Goldbeard), who was a king in Sogn. They had a son, to whom Harald gave his own name; and the boy was brought up in Sogn, by his mother's father, King Harald. Now when this Harald had lived out his days nearly, and was become weak, having no son, he gave his dominions to his daughter's son Harald, and gave him his title of king; and he died soon after. The same winter his daughter Ragnhild died; and the following spring the young Harald fell sick, and died at ten years of age. As soon as Halfdan the Black heard of his son's death, he took the road northwards to Sogn with a great force, and was well received. He claimed the heritage and dominion after his son; and no opposition being made, he took the whole kingdom. Earl Atle Mjove (the Slender), who was a friend of King Halfdan, came to him from Gaular; and the king set him over the Sogn district, to judge in the country according to the country's laws, and collect scat upon the king's account. Thereafter King Halfdan proceeded to his kingdom in the Uplands.

4.—HALFDAN'S STRIFE WITH GANDALF'S SONS.

In autumn, King Halfdan proceeded to Vingulmark. One night when he was there in guest quarters, it happened that about midnight a man came to him who had been on the watch on horseback, and told him a war force was come near to the house. The king instantly got up, ordered his men to arm themselves, and went out of the house and drew them up in battle order. At the same moment, Gandalf's sons, Hysing and Helsing, made their appearance with a large army. There was a great battle; but Halfdan being overpowered by the numbers of people, fled to the forest, leaving many of his men on this spot. His foster-father, Olver Spake (the Wise), fell here. The people now came in swarms to King Halfdan, and he advanced to seek Gandalf's sons. They met at Eid, near Lake Oieren, and fought there. Hysing and Helsing fell, and their brother Hake saved himself by flight. King Halfdan then took possession of the whole of Vingulmark, and Hake fled to Alfheimar.

5.—HALFDAN'S MARRIAGE WITH HJORT'S DAUGHTER.

Sigurd Hjort was the name of a king in Ringerike, who was stouter and stronger than any other man, and his equal could not be seen for a handsome appearance. His father was Helge Hvasse (the Sharp); and his mother was Aslaug, a daughter of Sigurd the worm-eyed, who again was a son of Ragnar Lodbrok. It is told of Sigurd that when he was only twelve years old he killed in single

combat the berserk Hildebrand, and eleven others of his comrades; and many are the deeds of manhood told of him in a long saga about his feats. Sigurd had two children, one of whom was a daughter, called Ragnhild, then twenty years of age, and an excellent brisk girl. Her brother Guthorm was a youth. It is related in regard to Sigurd's death that he had a custom of riding out quite alone in the uninhabited forest to hunt the wild beasts that are hurtful to man, and he was always very eager at this sport. One day he rode out into the forest as usual, and when he had ridden a long way he came out at a piece of cleared land near to Hadeland. There the berserk Hake came against him with thirty men, and they fought. Sigurd Hjort fell there, after killing twelve of Hake's men; and Hake himself lost one hand, and had three other wounds. Then Hake and his men rode to Sigurd's house, where they took his daughter Ragnhild and her brother Guthorm, and carried them, with much property and valuable articles, home to Hadeland, where Hake had many great farms. He ordered a feast to be prepared, intending to hold his wedding with Ragnhild; but the time passed on account of his wounds, which healed slowly; and the berserk Hake of Hadeland had to keep his bed, on account of his wounds, all the autumn and beginning of winter. Now King Halfdan was in Hedemark at the Yule entertainments when he heard this news; and one morning early, when the king was dressed, he called to him Harek Gand, and told him to go over to Hadeland, and bring him Ragnhild, Sigurd Hjort's daughter. Harek got ready with a hundred men, and

made his journey so that they came over the lake to Hake's house in the grey of the morning, and beset all the doors and stairs of the places where the house-servants slept. Then they broke into the sleeping-room where Hake slept, took Ragnhild, with her brother Guthorm, and all the goods that were there, and set fire to the house-servants' place, and burnt all the people in it. Then they covered over a magnificent waggon, placed Ragnhild and Guthorm in it, and drove down upon the ice. Hake got up and went after them a while; but when he came to the ice on the lake, he turned his sword-hilt to the ground and let himself fall upon the point, so that the sword went through him. He was buried under a mound on the banks of the lake. When King Halfdan, who was very quick of sight, saw the party returning over the frozen lake, and with a covered waggon, he knew that their errand was accomplished according to his desire. Thereupon he ordered the tables to be set out, and sent people all round in the neighbourhood to invite plenty of guests; and the same day there was a good feast which was also Halfdan's marriage-feast with Ragnhild, who became a great queen. Ragnhild's mother was Thorny, a daughter of Klakharald king in Jutland, and a sister of Thrye Dannebod who was married to the Danish king, Gorm the Old, who then ruled over the Danish dominions.

6.—OF RAGNHILD'S DREAM.

Ragnhild, who was wise and intelligent, dreamt great dreams. She dreamt, for one, that she was standing out

in her herb-garden, and she took a thorn out of her shift; but while she was holding the thorn in her hand it grew so that it became a great tree, one end of which struck itself down into the earth, and it became firmly rooted; and the other end of the tree raised itself so high in the air that she could scarcely see over it, and it became also wonderfully thick. The under part of the tree was red with blood, but the stem upwards was beautifully green, and the branches white as snow. There were many and great limbs to the tree, some high up, others low down; and so vast were the tree's branches that they seemed to her to cover all Norway, and even much more.

7.—OF HALFDAN'S DREAM.

King Halfdan never had dreams, which appeared to him an extraordinary circumstance; and he told it to a man called Thorleif Spake (the Wise), and asked him what his advice was about it. Thorleif said that what he himself did, when he wanted to have any revelation by dream, was to take his sleep in a swine-sty, and then it never failed that he had dreams. The king did so, and the following dream was revealed to him. He thought he had the most beautiful hair, which was all in ringlets; some so long as to fall upon the ground, some reaching to the middle of his legs, some to his knees, some to his loins or the middle of his sides, some to his neck, and some were only as knots springing from his head. These ringlets were of various colours; but one ringlet surpassed all the others in beauty, lustre, and size. This dream he

told to Thorleif, who interpreted it thus:—There should be a great posterity from him, and his descendants should rule over countries with great, but not all with equally great honour; but one of his race should be more celebrated than all the others. It was the opinion of people that this ringlet betokened King Olaf the Saint.

King Halfdan was a wise man, a man of truth and uprightness—who made laws, observed them himself, and obliged others to observe them. And that violence should not come in place of the laws, he himself fixed the number of criminal acts in law, and the compensations, mulcts, or penalties, for each case, according to every one's birth and dignity. [1]

Queen Ragnhild gave birth to a son, and water was poured over him, and the name of Harald given him, and he soon grew stout and remarkably handsome. As he grew up he became very expert at all feats, and showed also a good understanding. He was much beloved by his mother, but less so by his father.

8.—HALFDAN'S MEAT VANISHES AT A FEAST.

King Halfdan was at a Yule-feast in Hadeland, where a wonderful thing happened one Yule evening. When

[1]The penalty, compensation, or manbod for every injury, due to the party injured, or to his family and next of kin if the injury was the death or premeditated murder of the party, appears to have been fixed for every rank and condition, from the murder of the king down to the maiming or beating a man's cattle or his slave. A man for whom no compensation was due was a dishonored person, or an outlaw. It appears to have been optional with the injured party, or his kin if he had been killed, to take the mulct or compensation, or to refuse it, and wait an opportunity of taking vengeance for the injury on the party who inflicted it, or on his kin. A part of each mulct or compensation was due to the king; and these fines or penalties appear to have constituted a great proportion of the king's revenues, and to have been settled in the Things held in every district for administering the law with the lagman.—L.

the great number of guests assembled were going to sit down to table, all the meat and all the ale disappeared from the table. The king sat alone very confused in mind; all the others set off, each to his home, in consternation. That the king might come to some certainty about what had occasioned this event, he ordered a Fin to be seized who was particularly knowing, and tried to force him to disclose the truth; but however much he tortured the man, he got nothing out of him. The Fin sought help particularly from Harald, the king's son, and Harald begged for mercy for him, but in vain. Then Harald let him escape against the king's will, and accompanied the man himself. On their journey they came to a place where the man's chief had a great feast, and it appears they were well received there. When they had been there until spring, the chief said, "Thy father took it much amiss that in winter I took some provisions from him,—now I will repay it to thee by a joyful piece of news: thy father is dead; and now thou shalt return home, and take possession of the whole kingdom which he had, and with it thou shalt lay the whole kingdom of Norway under thee."

9.—HALFDAN'S DEATH.

Halfdan the Black was driving from a feast in Hadeland, and it so happened that his road lay over the lake called Rand. It was in spring, and there was a great thaw. They drove across the bight called Rykinsvik, where in winter there had been a pond broken in the ice

for cattle to drink at, and where the dung had fallen upon the ice the thaw had eaten it into holes. Now as the king drove over it the ice broke, and King Halfdan and many with him perished. He was then forty years old. He had been one of the most fortunate kings in respect of good seasons. The people thought so much of him, that when his death was known and his body was floated to Ringerike to bury it there, the people of most consequence from Raumarike, Vestfold, and Hedemark came to meet it. All desired to take the body with them to bury it in their own district, and they thought that those who got it would have good crops to expect. At last it was agreed to divide the body into four parts. The head was laid in a mound at Stein in Ringerike, and each of the others took his part home and laid it in a mound; and these have since been called Halfdan's Mounds.

HARALD HARFAGER'S SAGA.

1.—HARALD'S STRIFE WITH HAKE AND HIS FATHER GANDALF.

Harald[1] was but ten years old when he succeeded his father (Halfdan the Black). He became a stout, strong, and comely man, and withal prudent and manly. His mother's brother, Guthorm, was leader of the hird, at the head of the government, and commander (*hertogi*) of the army. After Halfdan the Black's death, many chiefs coveted the dominions he had left. Among these King Gandalf was the first; then Hogne and Frode, sons of Eystein, king of Hedemark; and also Hogne Karuson came from Ringerike. Hake, the son of Gandalf, began with an expedition of 300 men against Vestfold, marched by the main road through some valleys, and expected to come suddenly upon King Harald; while his father Gandalf sat at home with his army, and prepared to cross over the fiord into Vestfold. When Duke Guthorm heard of this he gathered an army, and marched up the country with King Harald against Hake. They met in a valley, in which they fought a great battle, and King Harald was victorious; and there

[1]The first twenty chapters of this saga refer to Harald's youth and his conquest of Norway. This portion of the saga is of great importance to the Icelanders, as the settlement of their isle was a result of Harald's wars. The second part of the saga (chaps. 21-46) treats of the disputes between Harald's sons, of the jarls of Orkney, and of the jarls of More. With this saga we enter the domain of history.—*Ed.*

fell King Hake and most of his people. The place has since been called Hakadale. Then King Harald and Duke Guthorm turned back, but they found King Gandalf had come to Vestfold. The two armies marched against each other, and met, and had a great battle; and it ended in King Gandalf flying, after leaving most of his men dead on the spot, and in that state he came back to his kingdom. Now when the sons of King Eystein in Hedemark heard the news, they expected the war would come upon them, and they sent a message to Hogne Karuson and to Herse Gudbrand, and appointed a meeting with them at Ringsaker in Hedemark.

2.—KING HARALD OVERCOMES FIVE KINGS.

After the battle King Harald and Guthorm turned back, and went with all the men they could gather through the forests towards the Uplands. They found out where the Upland kings had appointed their meeting-place, and came there about the time of midnight, without the watchmen observing them until their army was before the door of the house in which Hogne Karuson was, as well as that in which Gudbrand slept. They set fire to both houses; but King Eystein's two sons slipped out with their men, and fought for a while, until both Hogne and Frode fell. After the fall of these four chiefs, King Harald, by his relation Guthorm's success and powers, subdued Hedemark, Ringerike, Gudbrandsdal, Hadeland, Thoten, Raumarike, and the whole northern part of Vingulmark. King Harald and Guthorm had thereafter war with King

Gandalf, and fought several battles with him; and in the last of them King Gandalf was slain, and King Harald took the whole of his kingdom as far south as the river Raum.

3.—OF GYDA, DAUGHTER OF EIRIK.

King Harald sent his men to a girl called Gyda, a daughter of King Eirik of Hordaland, who was brought up as foster-child in the house of a great bonde in Valdres. The king wanted her for his concubine; for she was a remarkably handsome girl, but of high spirit withal. Now when the messengers came there, and delivered their errand to the girl, she answered, that she would not throw herself away even to take a king for her husband, who had no greater kindom to rule over than a few districts. "And methinks," said she, "it is wonderful that no king here in Norway will make the whole country subject to him, in the same way as Gorm the Old did in Denmark, or Eirik at Upsala." The messengers thought her answer was dreadfully haughty, and asked what she thought would come of such an answer; for Harald was so mighty a man, that his invitation was good enough for her. But although she had replied to their errand differently from what they wished, they saw no chance, on this occasion, of taking her with them against her will; so they prepared to return. When they were ready, and the people followed them out, Gyda said to the messengers, "Now tell to King Harald these my words. I will only agree to be his lawful wife upon the condition that he shall first, for my sake,

subject to himself the whole of Norway, so that he may rule over that kingdom as freely and fully as King Eirik over the Swedish dominions, or King Gorm over Denmark; for only then, methinks, can he be called the king of a people."

4.—KING HARALD'S VOW.

Now came the messengers back to King Harald, bringing him the words of the girl, and saying she was so bold and foolish that she well deserved that the king should send a greater troop of people for her, and inflict on her some disgrace. Then answered the king, "This girl has not spoken or done so much amiss that she should be punished, but rather she should be thanked for her words. She has reminded me," said he, "of something which it appears to me wonderful I did not think of before. And now," added he, "I make the solemn vow, and take God to witness, who made me and rules over all things, that never shall I clip or comb my hair until I have subdued the whole of Norway, with scat,[1] and duties, and domains; or if not, have died in the attempt." Guthorm thanked the king warmly for his vow; adding, that it was royal work to fulfil royal words.

5.—THE BATTLE IN ORKADAL.

After this the two relations gather together a great force, and prepare for an expedition to the Uplands, and northwards up the valley (Gudbrandsdal), and north

[1]Scat was a land-tax, paid to the king in money, malt, meal, or flesh-meat, from all lands; and was adjudged by the Thing to each king upon his accession, and being proposed and accepted as king.

over Dovrefjeld; and when the king came down to the inhabited land he ordered all the men to be killed, and everything wide around to be delivered to the flames. And when the people came to know this, they fled every one where he could; some down the country to Orkadal, some to Gaulardal, some to the forests. But some begged for peace, and obtained it, on condition of joining the king and becoming his men. He met no opposition until he came to Orkadal. There a crowd of people had assembled, and he had his first battle with a king called Gryting. Harald won the victory, and King Gryting was made prisoner, and most of his people killed. He took service himself under the king, and swore fidelity to him. Thereafter all the people in Orkadal district went under King Harald, and became his men.

6.—KING HARALD'S LAWS FOR LAND PROPERTY.

King Harald made this law over all the lands he conquered, that all the udal property should belong to him; and that the bondes, both great and small, should pay him land dues for their possessions. Over every district he set an earl to judge according to the law of the land and to justice, and also to collect the land dues and the fines; and for this each earl received a third part of the dues, and services, and fines, for the support of his table and other expenses. Each earl had under him four or more herses, each of whom had an estate of twenty marks yearly income bestowed on him and was bound to support twenty men-at-arms, and the earl sixty men, at their own ex-

penses. The king had increased the land dues and burdens so much, that each of his earls had greater power and income than the kings had before; and when that became known at Throndhjem, many great men joined the king, and took his service.

7.—BATTLE IN GAULARDAL.

It is told that Earl Hakon Grjotgardson came to King Harald from Yrjar, and brought a great crowd of men to his service. Then King Harald went into Gaulardal, and had a great battle, in which he slew two kings, and conquered their dominions; and these were Gaulardal district and Strind district. He gave Earl Hakon Strind district to rule over as earl. King Harald then proceeded to Stjoradal, and had a third battle, in which he gained the victory, and took that district also. Thereupon the Throndhjem people assembled, and four kings met together with their troops. The one ruled over Veradal, the second over Skaun, third over the Sparbyggja district, and the fourth over Eyin Idre (Inderöen); and this latter had also Eyna district. These four kings marched with their men against King Harald, but he won the battle; and some of these kings fell, and some fled. In all, King Harald fought at the least eight battles, and slew eight kings, in the Throndhjem district, and laid the whole of it under him.

8.—HARALD SEIZES NAUMUDAL DISTRICT.

North in Naumudal were two brothers, kings,—Her-

laug and Hrollaug; and they had been for three summers raising a mound or tomb of stone and lime and of wood. Just as the work was finished, the brothers got the news that King Harald was coming upon them with his army. Then King Herlaug had a great quantity of meat and drink brought into the mound, and went into it himself, with eleven companions, and ordered the mound to be covered up. King Hrollaug, on the contrary, went upon the summit of the mound, on which the kings were wont to sit, and made a throne to be erected, upon which he seated himself. Then he ordered feather-beds to be laid upon the bench below, on which the earls were wont to be seated, and threw himself down from his high seat or throne into the earl's seat, giving himself the title of earl. Now Hrollaug went to meet King Harald, gave up to him his whole kingdom, offered to enter into his service, and told him his whole proceeding. Then took King Harald a sword, fastened it to Hrollaug's belt, bound a shield to his neck, and made him thereupon an earl, and led him to his earl's seat; and therewith gave him the district of Naumudal, and set him as earl over it. (866).[1]

9.—KING HARALD'S HOME AFFAIRS.

King Harald then returned to Throndhjem, where he dwelt during the winter, and always afterwards called it his home. He fixed here his head residence, which is

[1]Before writing was in general use, this symbolical way of performing all important legal acts appears to have entered into the jurisprudence of all savage nations; and according to Gibbon, chap. 44, "the jurisprudence of the first Romans exhibited the scenes of a pantomime: the words were adapted to the gestures, and the slightest error or neglect in the *forms* of proceeding was sufficient to annul the *substance* of the fairest claims."—*Ed.*

called Lade. This winter he took to wife Asa, a daughter of Earl Hakon Grjotgardson, who then stood in great favour and honour with the king. In spring the king fitted out his ships. In winter he had caused a great frigate (a dragon) to be built, and had it fitted out in the most splendid way, and brought his house-troops and his berserks on board. The forecastle men were picked men, for they had the king's banner. From the stem to the mid-hold was called rausn, or the fore-defence; and there were the berserks. Such men only were received into King Harald's house-troop as were remarkable for strength, courage, and all kinds of dexterity; and they alone got place in his ship, for he had a good choice of house-troops from the best men of every district. King Harald had a great army, many large ships, and many men of might followed him. Hornklofe, in his poem called "Glymdrapa," tells of this; and also that King Harald had a battle with the people of Orkadal, at Opdal forest, before he went upon this expedition.

"O'er the broad heath the bowstrings twang,
While high in air the arrows sang;
The iron shower drives to flight
The foeman from the bloody fight.
The warder of great Odin's shrine,
The fair-haired son of Odin's line,
Raises the voice which gives the cheer,
First in the track of wolf or bear.
His master voice drives them along
To Hel—a destined, trembling throng;
And Nokve's ship, with glancing sides,
Must fly to the wild ocean's tides,—
Must fly before the king who leads
Norse axe-men on their ocean steeds."

10.—BATTLE AT SOLSKEL.

King Harald moved out with his army from Throndhjem, and went southwards to More. Hunthiof was the name of the king who ruled over the district of More.

Solve Klofe was the name of his son, and both were great warriors. King Nokve, who ruled over Raumsdal, was the brother of Solve's mother. Those chiefs gathered a great force when they heard of King Harald, and came against him. They met at Solskel, and there was a great battle, which was gained by King Harald (A. D. 867). Hornklofe tells of this battle:—

"Thus did the hero known to fame,
The leader of the shields, whose name
Strikes every heart with dire dismay,
Launch forth his war-ships to the fray.

Two kings he fought; but little strife
Was needed to cut short their life.
A clang of arms by the sea-shore,—
And the shields' sound was heard no more."

The two kings were slain, but Solve escaped by flight; and King Harald laid both districts under his power. He stayed here long in summer to establish law and order for the country people, and set men to rule them, and keep them faithful to him; and in autumn he prepared to return northwards to Throndhjem. Ragnvald Earl of More, a son of Eystein Glumra, had the summer before become one of Harald's men; and the king set him as chief over these two districts, North More and Raumsdal; strengthened him both with men of might and bondes, and gave him the help of ships to defend the coast against enemies. He was called Ragnvald the Mighty, or the Wise; and people say both names suited well. King Harald came back to Throndhjem about winter.

11.—FALL OF KINGS ARNVID AND AUDBJORN.

The following spring (A. D. 868) King Harald raised a great force in Throndhjem, and gave out that he would proceed to South More. Solve Klofe had passed the

winter in his ships of war, plundering in North More, and had killed many of King Harald's men; pillaging some places, burning others, and making great ravage; but sometimes he had been, during the winter, with his friend King Arnvid in South More. Now when he heard that King Harald was come with ships and a great army, he gathered people, and was strong in men-at-arms; for many thought they had to take vengeance of King Harald. Solve Klofe went southwards to Firdafylke (the Fjord district), which King Audbjorn ruled over, to ask him to help, and join his force to King Arnvid's and his own. "For," said he, "it is now clear that we all have but one course to take; and that is to rise, all as one man, against King Harald, for we have strength enough, and fate must decide the victory; for as to the other condition of becoming his servants, that is no condition for us, who are not less noble than Harald. My father thought it better to fall in battle for his kingdom, than to go willingly into King Harald's service, or not to abide the chance of weapons like the Naumudal kings." King Solve's speech was such that King Audbjorn promised his help, and gathered a great force together and went with it to King Arnvid, and they had a great army. Now, they got news that King Harald was come from the north, and they met within Solskel. And it was the custom to lash the ships together, stem to stem; so it was done now. King Harald laid his ship against King Arnvid's, and there was the sharpest fight, and many men fell on both sides. At last King Harald was raging with anger, and went forward to the fore-deck, and slew so dread-

fully that all the forecastle men of Arnvid's ship were driven aft of the mast, and some fell. Thereupon Harald boarded the ship, and King Arnvid's men tried to save themselves by flight, and he himself was slain in his ship. King Audbjorn also fell; but Solve fled. So says Hornklofe:—

"Against the hero's shield in vain
The arrow-storm fierce pours its rain.
The king stands on the blood-stained deck,
Trampling on many a stout foe's neck;
And high above the dinning stound
Of helm and axe, and ringing sound
Of blade and shield, and raven's cry,
Is heard his shout of 'Victory!'"

Of King Harald's men, fell his earls Asgaut and Asbjorn, together with his brothers-in-law, Grjotgard and Herlaug, the sons of Earl Hakon of Lade. Solve became afterwards a great sea-king, and often did great damage in King Harald's dominions.

12.—KING VEMUND BURNT TO DEATH.

After this battle (A. D. 868) King Harald subdued South More; but Vemund, King Audbjorn's brother, still had Firdafylke. It was now late in harvest, and King Harald's men gave him the counsel not to proceed southwards round Stad. Then King Harald set Earl Ragnvald over South and North More and also Raumsdal, and he had many people about him. King Harald returned to Throndhjem. The same winter (A. D. 869) Ragnvald went over Eid, and southwards to the Fjord district. There he heard news of King Vemund, and came by night to a place called Naustdal, where King Vemund was living in guest-quarters. Earl Ragnvald surrounded the house in which they were quartered, and

burnt the king in it, together with ninety men. Then came Berdlukare to Earl Ragnvald with a completely armed long-ship, and they both returned to More. The earl took all the ships Vemund had, and all the goods he could get hold of. Berdlukare proceeded north to Throndhjem to King Harald, and became his man; and a dreadful berserk he was.

13.—DEATH OF EARLS HAKON, AND ATLE MJOVE.

The following spring (869) King Harald went southwards with his fleet along the coast, and subdued Firdafylke. Then he sailed eastward along the land until he came to Vik; but he left Earl Hakon Grjotgardson behind, and set him over the Fjord district. Earl Hakon sent word to Earl Atle Mjove that he should leave Sogn district, and be earl over Gaular district, as he had been before, alleging that King Harald had given Sogn district to him. Earl Atle sent word that he would keep both Sogn district and Gaular district, until he met King Harald. The two earls quarreled about this so long, that both gathered troops. They met at Fialar, in Stavanger fiord, and had a great battle, in which Earl Hakon fell, and Earl Atle got a mortal wound, and his men carried him to the island of Atley, where he died. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"He who stood a rooted oak,
Unshaken by the swordsman's stroke,
Amidst the whiz of arrows slain,
Has fallen upon Fjalar's plain.
There, by the ocean's rocky shore.
The waves are stained with the red gore
Of stout Earl Hakon Grjotgard's son,
And of brave warriors many a one."

14.—HARALD AND THE SWEDISH KING EIRIK.

King Harald came with his fleet eastward to Viken and landed at Tunsberg, which was then a trading town. He had then been four years in Throndhjem, and in all that time had not been in Viken. Here he heard the news that Eirik Eymundson, king of Sweden, had laid under him Vermaland, and was taking scat or land-tax from all the forest settlers; and also that he called the whole country north to Svinasund, and west along the sea, West Gautland; and which altogether he reckoned to his kingdom, and took land-tax from it. Over this country he had set an earl, by name Hrane Gauzke, who had the earldom between Svinasund and the Gaut river, and was a mighty earl. And it was told to King Harald that the Swedish king said he would not rest until he had as great a kingdom in Viken as Sigurd Hring, or his son Ragnar Lodbrok, had possessed; and that was Raumarike and Vestfold, all the way to the isle Grenmar, and also Vingulmark, and all that lay south of it. In all these districts many chiefs, and many other people, had given obedience to the Swedish king. King Harald was very angry at this, and summoned the bondes to a Thing at Fold, where he laid an accusation against them for treason towards him. Some bondes defended themselves from the accusation, some paid fines, some were punished. He went thus through the whole district during the summer, and in harvest he did the same in Raumarike, and laid the two districts under his power. Towards winter he heard that Eirik king of Sweden was, with his court, going about in Vermaland in guest-quarters.

15.—HARALD AT A FEAST OF THE PEASANT AKE.

King Harald takes his way across the Eid forest eastward, and comes out in Vermaland, where he also orders feasts to be prepared for himself. There was a man by name Ake, who was the greatest of the bondes of Vermaland, very rich, and at that time very aged. He sent men to King Harald, and invited him to a feast, and the king promised to come on the day appointed. Ake invited also King Eirik to a feast, and appointed the same day. Ake had a great feasting hall, but it was old; and he made a new hall, not less than the old one, and had it ornamented in the most splendid way. The new hall he had hung with new hangings, but the old had only its old ornaments. Now when the kings came to the feast, King Eirik with his court was taken into the old hall; but Harald with his followers into the new. The same difference was in all the table furniture, and King Eirik and his men had the old-fashioned vessels and horns, but all gilded and splendid; while King Harald and his men had entirely new vessels and horns adorned with gold, all with carved figures, and shining like glass; and both companies had the best of liquor. Ake the bonde had formerly been King Halfdan the Black's man. Now when daylight came, and the feast was quite ended, and the kings made themselves ready for their journey, and the horses were saddled, came Ake before King Harald, leading in his hand his son Ubbe, a boy of twelve years of age, and said, "If the goodwill I have shown to thee, sire, in my feast, be worth thy friendship, show it hereafter

to my son. I give him to thee now for thy service." The king thanked him with many agreeable words for his friendly entertainment, and promised him his full friendship in return. Then Ake brought out great presents, which he gave to the king, and they gave each other thereafter the parting kiss. Ake went next to the Swedish king, who was dressed and ready for the road, but not in the best humour. Ake gave to him also good and valuable gifts; but the king answered only with few words, and mounted his horse. Ake followed the king on the road, and talked with him. The road led through a wood which was near to the house; and when Ake came to the wood, the king said to him, "How was it that thou madest such a difference between me and King Harald as to give him the best of everything, although thou knowest thou art my man?" "I think," answered Ake, "that there failed in it nothing, king, either to you or to your attendants, in friendly entertainment at this feast. But that all the utensils for your drinking were old, was because you are now old; but King Harald is in the bloom of youth, and therefore I gave him the new things. And as to my being thy man, thou art just as much my man." On this the king out with his sword, and gave Ake his death-wound. King Harald was ready now also to mount his horse, and desired that Ake should be called. The people went to seek him; and some ran up the road that King Eirik had taken, and found Ake there dead. They came back, and told the news to King Harald, and he bids his men to be up, and avenge Ake the bonde. And away rode he and his men the way King Eirik had taken, until

they came in sight of each other. Each for himself rode as hard as he could, until Eirik came into the wood which divides Gautland and Vermaland. There King Harald wheels about, and returns to Vermaland, and lays the country under him, and kills King Eirik's men wheresoever he can find them. In winter King Harald returned to Raumarike, and dwelt there a while.

16.—HARALD'S JOURNEY TO TUNSBERG.

King Harald went out in winter to his ships at Tunsberg, rigged them, and sailed away eastward over the fiord, and subjected all Vingulmark to his dominion. All winter he was out with his ships, and marauded in Ranrike; so says Thorbjorn Hornklofe:—

"The Norseman's king is on the sea,
Tho' bitter wintry cold it be,—
On the wild waves his Yule keeps he.
When our brisk king can get his way,
He'll no more by the fireside stay
Than the young sun; he makes us play
The game of the bright sun-god Frey.
But the soft Swede loves well the fire,
The well-stuffed couch, the downy glove,
And from the hearth-seat will not move."

The Gautlanders gathered people together all over the country.

17.—THE BATTLE IN GAUTLAND.

In spring, when the ice was breaking up, the Gautlanders drove stakes into the Gaut river to hinder King Harald with his ships from coming to the land. But King Harald laid his ships alongside the stakes, and plundered the country, and burnt all around; so says Hornklofe:—

"The king, who finds a dainty feast,
For battle-bird and prowling beast,
Has won in war the southern land
That lies along the ocean's strand.
The leader of the helmets, he
Who leads his ships o'er the dark sea,
Harald, whose high-rigged masts appear
Like antlered fronts of the wild deer,
Has laid his ships close alongside
Of the foe's piles with daring pride."

Afterwards the Gautlanders came down to the strand with a great army, and gave battle to King Harald, and great was the fall of men. But it was King Harald who gained the day. Thus says Hornklofe:—

"Whistles the battle-axe in its swing,
O'er head the whizzing javelins sing,
Helmet and shield and hauberk ring;
The air-song of the lance is loud,
The arrows pipe in darkening cloud;
Through helm and mail the foemen feel
The blue edge of our king's good steel.
Who can withstand our gallant king?
The Gautland men their flight must wing."

18.—HRANE GAUZKE'S DEATH.

King Harald went far and wide through Gautland, and many were the battles he fought there on both sides of the river, and in general he was victorious. In one of these battles fell Hrane Gauzke; and then the king took his whole land north of the river and west of the Veneren, and also Vermaland. And after he turned back therefrom, he set Duke Guthorm as chief to defend the country, and left a great force with him. King Harald himself went first to the Uplands, where he remained a while, and then proceeded northwards over the Dovrefjeld to Throndhjem, where he dwelt for a long time. Harald began to have children. By Asa he had four sons. The eldest was Guthorm. Halfdan the Black and Halfdan the White were twins. Sigfrod was the fourth. They were all brought up in Throndhjem with all honour.

19.—BATTLE IN HAFERSFJORD.

News came in from the south land that the people of Hordaland and Rogaland, Agder and Thelemark, were gathering, and bringing together ships and weapons, and a great body of men. The leaders of this were Eirik king of Hordaland; Sulke king of Rogaland, and his brother Earl Sote; Kjotve the Rich, king of Agder, and his son Thor Haklang; and from Thelemark two brothers, Hroald Hryg and Had the Hard. Now when Harald got certain news of this, he assembled his forces, set his ships on the water, made himself ready with his men, and set out southwards along the coast, gathering many people from every district. King Eirik heard of this when he same south of Stad; and having assembled all the men he could expect, he proceeded southwards to meet the force which he knew was coming to his help from the east. The whole met together north of Jadar, and went into Hafersfjord, where King Harald was waiting with his forces. A great battle began, which was both hard and long; but at last King Harald gained the day. There King Eirik fell, and King Sulke, with his brother Earl Sote. Thor Haklang, who was a great berserk, had laid his ship against King Harald's, and there was above all measure a desperate attack, until Thor Haklang fell, and his whole ship was cleared of men. Then King Kjotve fled to a little isle outside, on which there was a good place of strength. Thereafter all his men fled, some to their ships, some up to the land; and the latter ran southwards over the country of Jadar. So says Hornklofe, viz.:—

"Has the news reached you?—have you heard
Of the great fight at Hafersfjord,
Between our noble king brave Harald
And King Kjotve rich in gold?
The foeman came from out the East,
Keen for the fray as for a feast.
A gallant sight it was to see
Their fleet sweep o'er the dark-blue sea;
Each war-ship, with its threatening throat
Of dragon fierce or ravenous brute[1]
Grim gaping from the prow; its wales
Glittering with burnished shields,[2] like scales;
Its crew of udal men of war,
Whose snow-white targets shone from far;
And many a mailed spearman stout
From the West countries round about,
English and Scotch, a foreign host,
And swordsmen from the far French coast.
And as the foemen's ships drew near,
The dreadful din you well might hear;
Savage berserks roaring mad,
And champions fierce in wolf-skins clad,[3]
Howling like wolves; and clanking jar
Of many a mail-clad man of war.
Thus the foe came; but our brave king
Taught them to fly as fast again.
For when he saw their force come o'er.
He launched his war-ships from the shore;
On the deep sea he launched his fleet,
And boldly rowed the foe to meet.
Fierce was the shock, and loud the clang
Of shields, until the fierce Haklang,
The foeman's famous berserk, fell.
Then from our men burst forth the yell
Of victory; and the King of Gold
Could not withstand our Harald bold,
But fled before his flaky locks
For shelter to the island rocks.
All in the bottom of the ships
The wounded lay, in ghastly heaps;
Backs up and faces down they lay,
Under the row-seats stowed away;
And many a warrior's shield, I ween,
Might on the warrior's back be seen,
To shield him as he fled amain
From the fierce stone-storm's pelting rain.
The mountain-folk, as I've heard say,
Ne'er stopped as they ran from the fray,
Till they had crossed the Jadar sea,
And reached their homes—so keen each soul
To drown his fright in the mead bowl."

20.—HARALD SUPREME SOVEREIGN IN NORWAY.

After this battle King Harald met no opposition in Norway, for all his opponents and greatest enemies were cut off. But some, and they were a great multitude, fled out of the country, and thereby great districts were peopled. Jemtaland and Helsingjaland were peopled then, although some Norwegians had already set up their habitation there. In the discontent that King Harald seized

[1]The war-ships were called dragons, from being decorated with the head of a dragon, serpent, or other wild animal; and the word "draco" was adopted in the Latin of the Middle Ages to denote a ship of war of the larger class. The snekke was the cutter or smaller war-ship.—L.

[2]The shields were hung over the side-rails of the ships.—L.

[3]The wolf-skin pelts were nearly as good as armour against the sword.—L.

on the lands of Norway, the out-countries of Iceland and the Farey Isles were discovered and peopled. The Northmen had also a great resort to Hjaltland (Shetland Isles) and many men left Norway, flying the country on account of King Harald, and went on viking cruises into the West sea. In winter they were in the Orkney Islands and Hebrides; but marauded in summer in Norway, and did great damage. Many, however, were the mighty men who took service under King Harald, and became his men, and dwelt in the land with him.

21.—HARALD'S MARRIAGE AND HIS CHILDREN.

When King Harald had now become sole king over all Norway, he remembered what that proud girl had said to him; so he sent men to her, and had her brought to him, and took her to his bed. And these were their children: Alof—she was the eldest; then was their son Hrorek; then Sigtryg, Frode, and Thorgils. King Harald had many wives and many children. Among them he had one wife, who was called Ragnhild the Mighty, a daughter of King Eirik, from Jutland; and by her he had a son, Eirik Blood-axe. He was also married to Svanhild, a daughter of Earl Eystein; and their sons were Olaf Geirstadaalf, Bjorn and Ragnar Rykkil. Lastly, King Harald married Ashild, a daughter of Hring Dagson, up in Ringerike; and their children were, Dag, Hring, Gudrod Skiria, and Ingigerd. It is told that King Harald put away nine wives when he married Ragnhild the Mighty. So says Hornklofe:—

"Harald, of noblest race the head,
A Danish wife took to his bed;
And out of doors nine wives he thrust,—
The mothers of the princes first,
Who 'mong Holmrygians hold command,
And those who rule in Hordaland.
And then he packed from out the place
The children born of Holge's race."

King Harald's children were all fostered and brought up by their relations on the mother's side. Guthorm the Duke had poured water over King Harald's eldest son, and had given him his own name. He set the child upon his knee, and was his foster-father, and took him with himself eastward to Viken, and there he was brought up in the house of Guthorm. Guthorm ruled the whole land in Viken and the Uplands, when King Harald was absent.

22.—KING HARALD'S VOYAGE TO THE WEST.

King Harald heard that the vikings, who were in the West sea in winter, plundered far and wide in the middle part of Norway; and therefore every summer he made an expedition to search the isles and out-skerries[1] on the coast. Wheresoever the vikings heard of him they all took to flight, and most of them out into the open ocean. At last the king grew weary of this work, and therefore one summer he sailed with his fleet right out into the West sea. First he came to Hjaltland (Shetland), and he slew all the vikings who could not save themselves by flight. Then King Harald sailed southwards, to the Orkney Islands, and cleared them all of vikings. Thereafter he proceeded to the Sudreys (Hebrides), plundered there, and slew many vikings who formerly had had men-at-arms under them. Many a battle was fought, and King

[1]Skerries are the uninhabited dry or half-tide rocks of a coast.—L.

Harald was always victorious. He then plundered far and wide in Scotland itself, and had a battle there. When he was come westward as far as the Isle of Man, the report of his exploits on the land had gone before him; for all the inhabitants had fled over to Scotland, and the island was left entirely bare both of people and goods, so that King Harald and his men made no booty when they landed. So says Hornklofe:—

"The wise, the noble king, great Harald,
Whose hand so freely scatters gold,
Led many a northern shield to war
Against the town upon the shore.
The wolves soon gathered on the sand
Of that sea-shore; for Harald's hand
The Scottish army drove away,
And on the coast left wolves a prey."

In this war fell Ivar, a son of Ragnvald, Earl of More; and King Harald gave Ragnvald, as a compensation for the loss, the Orkney and Shetland isles, when he sailed from the West; but Ragnvald immediately gave both these countries to his brother Sigurd, who remained behind them; and King Harald, before sailing eastward, gave Sigurd the earldom of them. Thorstein the Red, a son of Olaf the White and of Aud the Wealthy, entered into partnership with him; and after plundering in Scotland, they subdued Caithness and Sutherland, as far as Ekkjalsbakke. Earl Sigurd killed Melbridge Tooth, a Scotch earl, and hung his head to his stirrup-leather; but the calf of his leg were scratched by the teeth, which were sticking out from the head, and the wound caused inflammation in his leg, of which the earl died, and he was laid in a mound at Ekkjalsbakke. His son Guthorm ruled over these countries for about a year thereafter, and died without children. Many vikings, both Danes and Northmen, set themselves down then in those countries.

23.—HARALD HAS HIS HAIR CLIPPED.

After King Harald had subdued the whole land, he was one day at a feast in More, given by Earl Ragnvald. Then King Harald went into a bath, and had his hair dressed. Earl Ragnvald now cut his hair, which had been uncut and uncombed for ten years; and therefore the king had been called Lufa (*i. e.*, with rough matted hair). But then Earl Ragnvald gave him the distinguishing name—Harald Harfager (*i. e.*, fair hair); and all who saw him agreed that there was the greatest truth in that surname, for he had the most beautiful and abundant head of hair.

24.—ROLF GANGER DRIVEN INTO BANISHMENT.

Earl Ragnvald was King Harald's dearest friend, and the king had the greatest regard for him. He was married to Hild, a daughter of Rolf Nefia, and their sons were Rolf and Thorer. Earl Ragnvald had also three sons by concubines,—the one called Hallad, the second Einar, the third Hrollaug; and all three were grown men when their brothers born in marriage were still children. Rolf became a great viking, and was of so stout a growth that no horse could carry him, and wheresoever he went he must go on foot; and therefore he was called Rolf Ganger. He plundered much in the East sea. One summer, as he was coming from the eastward on a viking's expedition to the coast of Viken, he landed there and made a cattle foray. As King Harald happened, just at that time, to be in Viken, he heard of it, and was in a

great rage; for he had forbid, by the greatest punishment, the plundering within the bounds of the country. The king assembled a Thing, and had Rolf declared an outlaw over all Norway. When Rolf's mother, Hild, heard of it she hastened to the king, and entreated peace for Rolf; but the king was so enraged that here entreaty was of no avail. Then Hild spake these lines:—

"Think'st thou, King Harald, in thy anger,
To drive away my brave Rolf Ganger,
Like a mad wolf, from out the land?
Why, Harald, raise thy mighty hand?
Why banish Nefia's gallant name-son,
The brother of brave udal-men?
Why is thy cruelty so fell?
Bethink thee, monarch, it is ill
With such a wolf at wolf to play,
Who, driven to the wild woods away,
May make the king's best deer his prey."

Rolf Ganger went afterwards over sea to the West to the Hebrides, or Sudreys; and at last farther west to Valland, where he plundered and subdued for himself a great earldom, which he peopled with Northmen, from which that land is called Normandy. Rolf Ganger's son was William, father to Richard, and grandfather to another Richard, who was the father of Robert Longspear, and grandfather of William the Bastard, from whom all the following English kings are descended. From Rolf Ganger also are descended the earls in Normandy. Queen Ragnhild the Mighty lived three years after she came to Norway; and, after her death, her son and King Harald's was taken to the herse Thorer Hroaldson, and Eirik was fostered by him.

25.—OF THE FIN SVASE AND KING HARALD.

King Harald, one winter, went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands, and had ordered a Christmas feast to be

prepared for him at the farm Thoptar. On Christmas eve came Svase to the door, just as the king went to table, and sent a message to the king to ask if he would go out with him. The king was angry at such a message, and the man who had brought it in took out with him a reply of the king's displeasure. But Svase, notwithstanding, desired that his message should be delivered a second time; adding to it, that he was the Fin whose hut the king had promised to visit, and which stood on the other side of the ridge. Now the king went out, and promised to go with him, and went over the ridge to his hut, although some of his men dissuaded him. There stood Snæfrid, the daughter of Svase, a most beautiful girl; and she filled a cup of mead for the king. But he took hold both of the cup and of her hand. Immediately it was as if a hot fire went through his body; and he wanted that very night to take her to his bed. But Svase said that should not be unless by main force, if he did not first make her his lawful wife. Now King Harald made Snæfrid his lawful wife, and loved her so passionately that he forgot his kingdom, and all that belonged to his high dignity. They had four sons: the one was Sigurd Hrise; the others Halfdan Haleg, Gudrod Ljome and Ragnvald Rettilbeine. Thereafter Snæfrid died; but her corpse never changed, but was as fresh and red as when she lived. The king sat always beside her, and thought she would come to life again. And so it went on for three years that he was sorrowing over her death, and the people over his delusion. At last Thorleif the Wise succeeded, by his prudence, in curing him of his delusion by accosting him

thus:—"It is nowise wonderful, king, that thou grievest over so beautiful and noble a wife, and bestowest costly coverlets and beds of down on her corpse, as she desired; but these honours fall short of what is due, as she still lies in the same clothes. It would be more suitable to raise her, and change her dress." As soon as the body was raised in the bed all sorts of corruption and foul smells came from it, and it was necessary in all haste to gather a pile of wood and burn it; but before this could be done the body turned blue, and worms, toads, newts, paddocks, and all sorts of ugly reptiles came out of it, and it sank into ashes. Now the king came to his understanding again, threw the madness out of his mind, and after that day ruled his kingdom as before. He was strengthened and made joyful by his subjects, and his subjects by him, and the country by both.

26.—OF THJODOLF OF HVIN, THE SKALD.

After King Harald had experienced the cunning of the Fin woman, he was so angry that he drove from him the sons he had with her, and would not suffer them before his eyes. But one of them, Gudrod Ljome, went to his foster-father Thjodolf of Hvin, and asked him to go to the king, who was then in the Uplands; for Thjodolf was a great friend of the king. And so they went, and came to the king's house late in the evening, and sat down together unnoticed near the door. The king walked up and down the floor casting his eye along the benches; for he had a feast in the house, and the mead was just mixed. The king then murmured out these lines:—

"Tell me, ye aged grey-haired heroes,
Who have come here to seek repose,
Wherefore must I so many keep
Of such a set, who, one and all,
Right dearly love their souls to steep,
From morn till night, in the mead-bowl?"

Then Thjodolf replies:—

"A certain wealthy chief, I think,
Would gladly have had more to drink
With him, upon one bloody day,
When crowns were cracked in our sword-play."

Thjodolf then took off his hat, and the king recognised him, and gave him a friendly reception. Thjodolf then begged the king not to cast off his sons; "for they would with great pleasure have taken a better family descent upon the mother's side, if the king had given it to them." The king assented, and told him to take Gudrod with him as formerly; and he sent Halfdan and Sigurd to Ringerike, and Ragnvald to Hadaland, and all was done as the king ordered. They grew up to be very clever men, very expert in all exercises. In these times King Harald sat in peace in the land, and the land enjoyed quietness and good crops.

27.—OF EARL TORFEINAR'S OBTAINING ORKNEY.

When Earl Ragnvald in More heard of the death of his brother Earl Sigurd, and that the vikings were in possession of the country, he sent his son Hallad westward, who took the title of earl to begin with, and had many men-at-arms with him. When he arrived at the Orkney Islands, he established himself in the country; but both in harvest, winter, and spring, the vikings cruised about the isles, plundering the headlands, and committing depredations on the coast. Then Earl Hallad grew tired of the business, resigned his earldom, took up again his

rights as an allodial owner, and afterwards returned eastward into Norway. When Earl Ragnvald heard of this he was ill pleased with Hallad, and said his sons were very unlike their ancestors. Then said Einar, "I have enjoyed but little honour among you, and have little affection here to lose: now if you will give me force enough, I will go west to the islands, and promise you what at any rate will please you—that you shall never see me again." Earl Ragnvald replied, that he would be glad if he never came back; "For there is little hope," said he, "that thou will ever be an honour to thy friends, as all thy kin on thy mother's side are born slaves." Earl Ragnvald gave Einar a vessel completely equipped, and he sailed with it into the West sea in harvest. When he came to the Orkney Isles, two vikings, Thorer Treskeg and Kalf Skurfa, were in his way with two vessels. He attacked them instantly, gained the battle, and slew the two vikings. Then this was sung:—

"Then gave he Treskeg to the trolls,
Torfeinar slew Skurfa."

He was called Torfeinar, because he cut peat for fuel, there being no firewood, as in Orkney there are no woods. He afterwards was earl over the islands, and was a mighty man. He was ugly, and blind of an eye, yet very sharp-sighted withal.

28.—KING EIRIK EYMUNDSON'S DEATH.

Duke Guthorm dwelt principally at Tunsberg, and governed the whole of Viken when the king was not there. He defended the land, which, at that time, was much

plundered by the vikings. There were disturbances also up in Gautland as long as King Eirik Eymundson lived; but he died when King Harald Harfager had been ten years king of all Norway.

29.—GUTHORM'S DEATH IN TUNSBERG.

After Eirik, his son Bjorn was king of Svithjod for fifty years. He was father of Eirik the Victorious, and of Olaf the father of Styrbjorn. Guthorm died on a bed of sickness at Tunsberg, and King Harald gave his son Guthorm the government of that part of his dominions, and made him chief of it.

30.—EARL RAGNVALD BURNT IN HIS HOUSE.

When King Harald was forty years of age many of his sons were well advanced, and indeed they all came early to strength and manhood. And now they began to take it ill that the king would not give them any part of the kingdom, but put earls into every district; for they thought earls were of inferior birth to them. Then Halfdan Haleg and Gudrod Ljome set off one spring with a great force, and came suddenly upon Earl Ragnvald, earl of More, and surrounded the house in which he was, and burnt him and sixty men in it. Thereafter Halfdan took three long-ships, and fitted them out, and sailed into the West sea; but Gudrod set himself down in the land which Ragnvald formerly had. Now when King Harald heard this he set out with a great force against Gudrod, who had no other way left but to surrender, and he was

sent to Agder. King Harald then set Earl Ragnvald's son Thorer over More, and gave him his daughter Alof, called Arbot, in marriage. Earl Thorer, called the Silent, got the same territory his father Earl Ragnvald had possessed.

31.—HALFDAN HALEG'S DEATH.

Halfdan Haleg came very unexpectedly to Orkney, and Earl Einar immediately fled; but came back soon after, about harvest time, unnoticed by Halfdan. They met, and after a short battle Halfdan fled the same night. Einar and his men lay all night without tents, and when it was light in the morning they searched the whole island, and killed every man they could lay hold of. Then Einar said "What is that I see upon the isle of Rinansey?" Is it a man or a bird? Sometimes it raises itself up, and sometimes lies down again." They went to it, and found it was Halfdan Haleg, and took him prisoner.

Earl Einar sang the following song the evening before he went into this battle:—

"Where is the spear of Hrollaug? where
Is stout Rolf Ganger's bloody spear!
I see them not; yet never fear,
For Einar will not vengeance spare
Against his father's murderers, though
Hrollaug and Rolf are somewhat slow,
And silent Thorer sits and dreams
At home, beside the mead-bowl's streams."

Thereafter Earl Einar went up to Halfdan, and cut a spread eagle upon his back, by striking his sword through his back into his belly, dividing his ribs from the backbone down to his loins, and tearing out his lungs; and so Halfdan was killed. Einar then sang:—

"For Ragnvald's death my sword is red:
Of vengeance it cannot be said
That Einar's share is left unsped.
So now, brave boys, let's raise a mound,—
Heap stones and gravel on the ground
O'er Halfdan's corpse: this is the way
We Norsemen our scat duties pay."

Then Earl Einar took possession of the Orkney Isles as before. Now when these tidings came to Norway, Halfdan's brothers took it much to heart, and thought that his death demanded vengeance; and many were of the same opinion. When Einar heard this, he sang:—

"Many a stout udal-man, I know,
Has cause to wish my head laid low;
And many an angry udal knife
Would gladly drink of Einar's life.
But ere they lay Earl Einar low,—
Ere this stout heart betrays its cause,
Full many a heart will writhe, we know,
In the wolf's fangs, or eagle's claws."

32.—HARALD AND EINAR RECONCILED.

King Harald now ordered a levy, and gathered a great force, with which he proceeded westward to Orkney; and when Earl Einar heard that King Harald was come, he fled over to Caithness. He made the following verses on this occasion:—

"Many a bearded man must roam,
An exile from his house and home,
For cow or horse; but Halfdan's gore
Is red on Rinansey's wild shore.
A nobler deed—on Harald's shield
The arm of one who ne'er will yield
Has left a scar. Let peasants dread
The vengeance of the Norsemen's head;
I reck not of his wrath, but sing,
'Do thy worst!—I defy thee, king!' "

Men and messages, however, passed between the king and the earl, and at last it came to a conference; and when they met the earl submitted the case altogether to the king's decision, and the king condemned the earl Einar and the Orkney people to pay a fine of sixty marks of gold. As the bondes thought this was too heavy for them to pay, the earl offered to pay the whole if they

would surrender their udal lands to him. This they all agreed to do: the poor because they had but little pieces of land; the rich because they could redeem their udal rights again when they liked. Thus the earl paid the whole fine to the king, who returned in harvest to Norway. The earls for a long time afterwards possessed all the udal lands in Orkney, until Sigurd son of Hlodver gave back the udal rights.

33.—DEATH OF GUTHORM AND HALFDAN THE WHITE.

While King Harald's son Guthorm had the defence of Viken, he sailed outside of the islands on the coast, and came in by one of the mouths of the tributaries of the Gaut river. When he lay there Solve Klofe came upon him, and immediately gave him battle, and Guthorm fell. Halfdan the White and Halfdan the Black went out on an expedition, and plundered in the East sea, and had a battle in Eistland, where Halfdan the White fell.

34.—MARRIAGE OF EIRIK.

Eirik, Harald's son, was fostered in the house of the herse Thorer, son of Hroald, in the Fjord district. He was the most beloved and honoured by King Harald of all his sons. When Eirik was twelve years old, King Harald gave him five long-ships, with which he went on an expedition,—first in the Baltic; then southwards to Denmark, Friesland, and Saxland; on which expedition he passed four years. He then sailed out into the West sea, and plundered in Scotland, Bretland, Ireland, and Val-

land, and passed four years more in this way. Then he sailed north to Finmark, and all the way to Bjarmaland, where he had many a battle, and won many a victory. When he came back to Finmark, his men found a girl in a Lapland hut, whose equal for beauty they never had seen. She said her name was Gunhild, and that her father dwelt in Halogaland, and was called Ozur Tote. "I am here," she said, "to learn sorcery from two of the most knowing Fins in all Finmark, who are now out hunting. They both want me in marriage. They are so skilful that they can hunt out traces either upon the frozen or the thawed earth, like dogs; and they can run so swiftly on skees that neither man nor beast can come near them in speed. They hit whatever they take aim at, and thus kill every man who comes near them. When they are angry the very earth turns away in terror, and whatever living thing they look upon then falls dead. Now ye must not come in their way; but I will hide you here in the hut, and ye must try to get them killed." They agreed to it, and she hid them, and then took a leather bag, in which they thought there were ashes which she took in her hand, and strewed both outside and inside of the hut. Shortly after the Fins came home, and asked who had been there; and she answered, "Nobody has been here." "That is wonderful," said they, "we followed the traces close to the hut, and can find none after that." Then they kindled a fire, and made ready their meat, and Gunhild prepared her bed. It had so happened that Gunhild had slept the three nights before, but the Fins had watched the one upon the other, being jealous of each

other. "Now," she said to the Fins, "come here, and lie down one on each side of me." On which they were very glad to do so. She laid an arm round the neck of each, and they went to sleep directly. She roused them up; but they fell to sleep again instantly, and so soundly that she scarcely could waken them. She even raised them up in the bed, and still they slept. Thereupon she took two great seal-skin bags, and put their heads in them, and tied them fast under their arms; and then she gave a wink to the king's men. They run forth with their weapons, kill the two Fins, and drag them out of the hut. That same night came such a dreadful thunder-storm that they could not stir. Next morning they came to the ship, taking Gunhild with them, and presented her to Eirik. Eirik and his followers then sailed southwards to Halogaland; and he sent word to Ozur Tote, the girl's father, to meet him. Eirik said he would take his daughter in marriage, to which Ozur Tote consented, and Eirik took Gunhild, and went southwards with her (A. D. 922).

35.—HARALD DIVIDES HIS KINGDOM.

When King Harald was fifty years of age many of his sons were grown up, and some were dead. Many of them committed acts of great violence in the country, and were in discord among themselves. They drove some of the king's earls out of their properties, and even killed some of them. Then the king called together a numerous Thing in the south part of the country, and summoned to it all the people of the Uplands. At this Thing he gave to all his sons the title of king, and made a law that his

descendants in the male line should each succeed to the kingly title and dignity; but his descendants by the female side only to that of earl. And he divided the country among them thus:—Vingulmark, Raumarike, Vestfold, and Thelamark, he bestowed on Olaf, Bjorn, Sigtryg, Frode, and Thorgils. Hedemark and Gudbrandsdal he gave to Dag, Hring, and Ragnar. To Snæfrid's sons he gave Ringerike, Hadeland, Thoten, and the lands thereto belonging. His son Guthorm, as before mentioned, he had set over the country from Glommen to Svinasund and Ranrike. He had set him to defend the country to the East, as before has been written. King Harald himself generally dwelt in the middle of the country, and Hrorek and Gudrod were generally with his court, and had great estates in Hordaland and in Sogn. King Eirik was also with his father King Harald; and the king loved and regarded him the most of all his sons, and gave him Halogaland and North More, and Raumsdal. North in Throndhjem he gave Halfdan the Black, Halfdan the White, and Sigrod land to rule over. In each of these districts he gave his sons the one half of his revenues, together with the right to sit on a high-seat,—a step higher than earls, but a step lower than his own high-seat. His king's seat each of his sons wanted for himself after his death, but he himself destined it for Eirik. The Throndhjem people wanted Halfdan the Black to succeed to it. The people of Viken, and the Uplands, wanted those under whom they lived. And thereupon new quarrels arose among the brothers; and because they thought their dominions too little, they drove about in piratical expeditions. In this

way, as before related, Guthorm fell at the mouth of the Gaut river, slain by Solve Klofe; upon which Olaf took the kingdom he had possessed. Halfdan the White fell in Eistland, Halfdan Haleg in Orkney. King Harald gave ships of war to Thorgils and Frode, with which they went westward on a viking cruise, and plundered in Scotland, Ireland, and Bretland. They were the first of the Northmen who took Dublin. It is said that Frode got poisoned drink there; but Thorgils was a long time king over Dublin, until he fell into a snare of the Irish, and was killed.

36.—DEATH OF RAGNVALD RETTILBEINE.

Eirik Blood-axe expected to be head king over all his brothers and King Harald intended he should be so; and the father and son lived long together. Ragnvald Rettilbeine governed Hadaland, and allowed himself to be instructed in the arts of witchcraft, and became a great warlock. Now King Harald was a hater of all witchcraft. There was a warlock in Hordaland called Vitgeir; and when the king sent a message to him that he should give up his art of witchcraft, he replied in this verse:—

"The danger surely is not great When Harald's son in Hadeland,
From wizards born of mean estate, King Ragnvald, to the art lays hand."

But when King Harald heard this, King Eirik Blood-axe went by his orders to the Uplands, and came to Hadeland, and burned his brother Ragnvald in a house, along with eighty other warlocks; which work was much praised.

37.—DEATH OF GUDROD LJOME.

Gudrod Ljome was in winter on a friendly visit to his foster-father Thjodolf in Hvin, and had a well-manned ship, with which he wanted to go north to Rogaland. It was blowing a heavy storm at the time; but Gudrod was bent on sailing, and would not consent to wait. Thjodolf sang thus:—

"Wait, Gudrod, till the storm is past,—
Loose not thy long-ship while the blast
Howls over-head so furiously,—
Trust not thy long-ship to the sea,—
Loose not thy long-ship from the shore:
Hark to the ocean's angry roar!
See how the very stones are tost,
By raging waves high on the coast!
Stay, Gudrod, till the tempest's o'er—
Deep runs the sea off the Jadar's shore."

Gudrod set off in spite of what Thjodolf could say; and when they came off the Jadar the vessel sunk with them, and all on board were lost.

38.—KING BJORN KAUPMAN'S DEATH.

King Harald's son, Bjorn, ruled over Vestfold at that time, and generally lived at Tunsberg, and went but little on war expeditions. Tunsberg at that time was much frequented by merchant vessels, both from Viken and the north country, and also from the south, from Denmark, and Saxland. King Bjorn had also merchant ships on voyages to other lands, by which he procured for himself costly articles, and such things as he thought needful; and therefore his brothers called him Farman (the Seaman), and Kaupman (the Chapman). Bjorn was a man of sense and understanding, and promised to become a good ruler. He made a good and suitable marriage, and had a son by

his wife, who was named Gudrod. Eirik Blood-axe came from his Baltic cruise with ships of war, and a great force, and required his brother Bjorn to deliver to him King Harald's share of the scat and incomes of Vestfold. But it had always been the custom before, that Bjorn himself either delivered the money into the king's hands, or sent men of his own with it; and therefore he would continue with the old custom, and would not deliver the money. Eirik again wanted provisions, tents, and liquor. The brothers quarrelled about this; but Eirik got nothing, and left the town. Bjorn went also out of the town towards evening up to Sæheim. In the night Eirik came back after Bjorn, and came to Sæheim just as Bjorn and his men were seated at table drinking. Eirik surrounded the house in which they were; but Bjorn with his men went out and fought. Bjorn, and many men with him, fell. Eirik, on the other hand, got a great booty, and proceeded northwards. But this work was taken very ill by the people of Viken, and Eirik was much disliked for it; and the report went that King Olaf would avenge his brother Bjorn, whenever opportunity offered. King Bjorn lies in the mound of Farmanshaug at Sæheim.

39.—RECONCILIATION OF THE KINGS.

King Eirik went in winter northwards to More, and was at a feast in Solve, within the point Agdanes; and when Halfdan the Black heard of it he set out with his men, and surrounded the house in which they were. Eirik slept in a room which stood detached by itself, and he

escaped into the forest with four others; but Halfdan and his men burnt the main house, with all the people who were in it. With this news Eirik came to King Harald, who was very wroth at it, and assembled a great force against the Throndhjem people. When Halfdan the Black heard this he levied ships and men, so that he had a great force, and proceeded with it to Stad, within Thorsbjerg. King Harald lay with his men at Reinsletta. Now people went between them, and among others a clever man called Guthorm Sindre, who was then in Halfdan the Black's army, but had been formerly in the service of King Harald, and was a great friend of both. Guthorm was a great skald, and had once composed a song both about the father and the son, for which they had offered him a reward. But he would take nothing; but only asked that, some day or other, they should grant him any request he should make, which they promised to do. Now he presented himself to King Harald,—brought words of peace between them, and made the request to them both that they should be reconciled. So highly did the king esteem him, that in consequence of his request they were reconciled. Many other able men promoted this business as well as he; and it was so settled that Halfdan should retain the whole of his kingdom as he had it before, and should let his brother Eirik sit in peace. After this event Jorun, the skald-maid, composed some verses in *Sendibit* (The Biting Message) :—

"I know that Harald Fairhair
Knew the dark deed of Halfdan.
To Harald Halfdan seemed
Angry and cruel."

40.—BIRTH OF HAKON THE GOOD.

Earl Hakon Grjotgardson of Hlader had the whole rule over Throndhjem when King Harald was anywhere away in the country; and Hakon stood higher with the king than any in the country of Throndhjem. After Hakon's death his son Sigurd succeeded to his power in Throndhjem, and was the earl, and had his mansion at Hlader. King Harald's sons, Halfdan the Black and Sigrod, who had been before in the house of his father Earl Hakon, continued to be brought up in his house. The sons of Harald and Sigurd were about the same age. Earl Sigurd was one of the wisest men of his time, and married Bergljot, a daughter of Earl Thorer the Silent; and her mother was Alof Arbot, a daughter of Harald Harfager. When King Harald began to grow old he generally dwelt on some of his great farms in Hordaland; namely, Alreksstader or Sæheim, Fitjar, Utstein, or Ogvaldsnes in the island Kormt. When Harald was seventy years of age he begat a son with a girl called Thora Mosterstang, because her family came from Moster. She was descended from good people, being connected with Kare (Aslakson) of Hordaland; and was moreover a very stout and remarkably handsome girl. She was called the king's servant-girl; for at that time many were subject to service to the king who were of good birth, both men and women. Then it was the custom, with people of consideration, to choose with great care the man who should pour water over their children, and give them a name. Now when the time came that Thora, who was

then at Moster, expected her confinement, she would go to King Harald, who was then living at Sæheim; and she went northwards in a ship belonging to Earl Sigurd. They lay at night close to the land; and there Thora brought forth a child upon the land, up among the rocks, close to the ship's gangway, and it was a man child. Earl Sigurd poured water over him, and called him Hakon, after his own father, Hakon earl of Hlader. The boy soon grew handsome, large in size, and very like his father King Harald. King Harald let him follow his mother, and they were both in the king's house as long as he was an infant.

41.—KING ATHELSTAN'S MESSAGE.

At this time a king called Athelstan had taken the kingdom of England. He was called victorious and faithful. He sent men to Norway to King Harald, with the errand that the messengers should present him with a sword, with the hilt and handle gilt, and also the whole sheath adorned with gold and silver, and set with precious jewels. The ambassador presented the sword-hilt to the king, saying, "Here is a sword which King Athelstan sends thee, with the request that thou wilt accept it." The king took the sword by the handle; whereupon the ambassador said, "Now thou hast taken the sword according to our king's desire, and therefore art thou his subject, as thou hast taken his sword." King Harald saw now that this was an insult, for he would be subject to no man. But he remembered it was his rule, whenever any-

thing raised his anger, to collect himself, and let his passion run off, and then take the matter into consideration coolly. Now he did so, and consulted his friends, who all gave him the advice to let the ambassadors, in the first place, go home in safety.

42.—HAUK'S JOURNEY TO ENGLAND.

The following summer King Harald sent a ship westward to England, and gave the command of it to Hauk Habrok. He was a great warrior, and very dear to the king. Into his hands he gave his son Hakon. Hauk proceeded westward to England, and found King Athelstan in London, where there was just at the time a great feast and entertainment. When they came to the hall, Hauk told his men how they should conduct themselves; namely, that he who went first in should go last out, and all should stand in a row at the table, at equal distance from each other; and each should have his sword at his left side, but should fasten his cloak so that his sword should not be seen. Then they went into the hall, thirty in number. Hauk went up to the king and saluted him, and the king bade him welcome. Then Hauk took the child Hakon, and set it on the king's knee. The king looks at the boy, and asks Hauk what the meaning of this is. Hauk replies, "Harald the king bids thee foster his servant-girl's child." The king was in great anger, and seized a sword which lay beside him, and drew it, as if he was going to kill the child. Hauk says, "Thou hast borne him on thy knee, and thou canst murder him if thou wilt; but thou wilt not make an end of all King Harald's

sons by so doing." On that Hauk went out with all his men, and took the way direct to his ship, and put to sea,—for they were ready,—and came back to King Harald. The king was highly pleased with this; for it is the common observation of all people, that the man who fosters another's children is of less consideration than the other. From these transactions between the two kings, it appears that each wanted to be held greater than the other; but in truth there was no injury to the dignity of either, for each was the upper king in his own kingdom till his dying day.

43.—HAKON, THE FOSTER-SON OF ATHELSTAN, IS BAPTIZED.

King Athelstan had Hakon baptized, and brought up in the right faith, and in good habits, and all sorts of good manners, and he loved Hakon above all his relations; and Hakon was beloved by all men. He was henceforth called Athelstan's foster-son. He was an accomplished skald, and he was larger, stronger and more beautiful than other men; he was a man of understanding and eloquence, and also a good Christian. King Athelstan gave Hakon a sword, of which the hilt and handle were gold, and the blade still better; for with it Hakon cut down a mill-stone to the centre eye, and the sword thereafter was called the Quernbite.[1] Better sword never came into Norway, and Hakon carried it to his dying day.

[1]Quern is the name of the small hand mill-stones still found in use among the cottars in Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides.—L.
This sword is mentioned in the Younger Edda. There were many excellent swords in the olden time, and many of them had proper names.

44.—EIRIK BROUGHT TO THE SOVEREIGNTY.

When King Harald was eighty years of age (930) he became very heavy, and unable to travel through the country, or do the business of a king. Then he brought his son Eirik to his high-seat, and gave him the power and command over the whole land. Now when King Harald's other sons heard this, King Halfdan the Black also took a king's high-seat, and took all Throndhjem land, with the consent of all the people, under his rule as upper king. After the death of Bjorn the Chapman, his brother Olaf took the command over Vestfold, and took Bjorn's son, Gudrod, as his foster-child. Olaf's son was called Trygve; and the two foster-brothers were about the same age, and were hopeful and clever. Trygve, especially, was remarkable as a stout and strong man. Now when the people of Viken heard that those of Hordaland had taken Eirik as upper king, they did the same, and made Olaf the upper king in Viken, which kingdom he retained. Eirik did not like this at all. Two years after this, Halfdan the Black died suddenly at a feast in Throndhjem, and the general report was that Gunhild had bribed a witch to give him a death-drink. Thereafter the Throndhjem people took Sigrod to be their king.

45.—KING HARALD'S DEATH.

King Harald lived three years after he gave Eirik the supreme authority over his kingdom, and lived mostly on his great farms which he possessed, some in Rogaland, and some in Hordaland. Eirik and Gunhild had a son, on whom King Harald poured water, and gave him his

own name, and the promise that he should be king after his father Eirik. King Harald married most of his daughters within the country to his earls, and from them many great families are descended. King Harald died on a bed of sickness in Rogaland (933), and was buried under a mound at Haugar in Karmtsund. In Haugesund is a church, now standing; and not far from the churchyard, at the north-west side, is King Harald Harfager's mound; but his grave-stone stands west of the church, and is thirteen feet and a half high, and two ells broad. One stone was set at the head and one at the feet; on the top lay the slab, and below on both sides were laid small stones. The grave, mound, and stone, are there to the present day. Harald Harfager was, according to the report of men of knowledge, of remarkably handsome appearance, great and strong, and very generous and affable to his men. He was a great warrior in his youth; and people think that this was foretold by his mother's dream before his birth, as the lowest part of the tree she dreamt of was red as blood. The stem again was green and beautiful, which betokened his flourishing kingdom; and that the tree was white at the top showed that he should reach a grey-haired old age. The branches and twigs showed forth his posterity, spread over the whole land; for of his race, ever since, Norway has always had kings.

46.—THE DEATH OF OLAF AND OF SIGROD.

King Eirik took all the revenues (934), which the king had in the middle of the country, the next winter after King Harald's decease. But Olaf took all the revenues

eastward in Viken, and their brother Sigrod all that of the Throndhjem country. Eirik was very ill pleased with this; and the report went that he would attempt with force to get the sole sovereignty over the country, in the same way as his father had given it to him. Now when Olaf and Sigrod heard this, messengers passed between them; and after appointing a meeting place, Sigrod went eastward in spring to Viken, and he and his brother Olaf met at Tunsberg, and remained there a while. The same spring (934), King Eirik levied a great force, and ships, and steered towards Viken. He got such a strong steady gale that he sailed night and day, and came faster than the news of him. When he came to Tunsberg, Olaf and Sigrod, with their forces, went out of the town a little eastward to a ridge, where they drew up their men in battle order; but as Eirik had many more men he won the battle. Both brothers, Olaf and Sigrod, fell there; and both their grave-mounds are upon the ridge where they fell. Then King Eirik went through Viken, and subdued it, and remained far into summer. Gudrod and Trygve fled to the Uplands. Eirik was a stout handsome man, strong, and very manly,—a great and fortunate man of war; but bad-minded, gruff, unfriendly, and silent. Gunhild, his wife, was the most beautiful of women,—clever, with much knowledge, and lively; but a very false person, and very cruel in disposition. The children of King Eirik and Gunhild were, Gamle, the oldest; then Guthorm, Harald, Ragnfrod, Ragnhild, Erling, Gudrod, and Sigurd Sleva. All were handsome, and of manly appearance.[1]

[1]Of Eirik, his wife, and children, see the following sagas.

HAKON THE GOOD'S SAGA.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Of Eirik Blood-axe's five years' reign Snorre has no separate saga. He appears not to have been beloved by the people and his queen Gunhild seems to have had a bad influence on him.

Other accounts of Hakon may be found in *Fagrskinna* (chaps. 25-34), *Agrip*, *Historia*, *Norvegiae*, and in *Thjodrek* (chap. 4).

The reader is also referred to *Saxo*, *Egla*, *Laxdaela*, *Kormaks Saga*, *Gisle Surssons Saga*, *Halfred's Saga*, *Floamanna Saga*, *Viga Glums Saga*, and to *Landnamabok*.

Skalds mentioned in this Saga are:—Glum Geirason, Thord Sjarekson, Guthorm Sindre, Kormak Ogmundson, and Eyvind Skaldaspiller. In the *Egla* are found many poems belonging to this epoch by Egil Skallagrimson.

In *Fagrskinna* is found a poem (not given by Snorre) which Gunhild (his wife) had made on King Eirik after his death, telling how Odin welcomed him to Valhal. The author or skald who composed it is not known, but it is considered to be one of the gems of old Norse poetry, and we here quote it in Vigfusson's translation in his *Corpus Poeticum*, vol. i. pp. 260, 261. Gudbrand Vigfusson has filled up a few gaps from *Hakonarmal*, the poem at the end of this Saga. We have changed Vigfusson's orthography of names, and brought them into harmony with the spelling used in this work:—*Ed.*

Odin wakes in the morning and cries, as he opens his eyes, with his dream still fresh in his mind:—What dreams are these? I thought I arose before daybreak to make Valhal ready for a host of slain. I woke up the host of the chosen. I bade them rise up to strew the benches, and to fill up the beer-vats, and I bade valkyries to bear the wine, as if a king were coming. I look for the coming of some noble chiefs from the earth, wherefore my heart is glad.

Brage, Odin's counsellor, now wakes, as a great din is heard without, and calls out:—What is that thundering? as if a thousand men or some great host were tramping on—the walls and the benches are creaking withal—as if Balder was coming back to the hall of Odin?

Odin answers:—Surely thou speakest foolishly, good Brage, although thou art very wise. It thunders for Eirik the king, that is coming to the hall of Odin.

***Then turning to his heroes, he cries*:**—Sigmund and Sinfjotle, rise up in haste and go forth to meet the prince! Bid him in if it be Eirik, for it is he whom I look for.

***Sigmund answers*:**—Why lookest thou more for Eirik, the king, to Odin's hall, than for other kings?

***Odin answers*:**—Because he has reddened his brand, and borne his bloody sword in many a land.

***Quoth Sigmund*:**—Why didst thou rob him, the chosen king of victory, then, seeing thou thoughtest him so brave? . . .

***Odin answers*:**—Because it is not surely to be known, when the grey wolf shall come upon the seat of the god.

SECOND SCENE.—*Without Valhal.*

Sigmund and Sinfjotle go outside the hall and meet Eirik.

***Quoth Sigmund*:**—Hail to thee, Eirik, be welcome here, and come into the hall, thou gallant king! Now I will ask thee, what kings are these that follow thee from the clash of the sword edges?

***Eirik answers*:**—They are five kings; I will tell thee all their names; I myself am the sixth. (*The names followed in the song, whereof the rest is lost.*)

Fagrskinna says *Hakonarmal* was the model of this poem.

1.—HAKON CHOSEN KING.

Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was in England at the time (934) he heard of his father King Harald's death, and he immediately made himself ready to depart. King Athelstan gave him men, and a choice of good ships, and fitted him out for his journey most excellently. In harvest time he came to Norway, where he heard of the death of his brothers, and that King Eirik was then in Viken. Then Hakon sailed northwards to Throndhjem, where he went to Sigurd earl of Hlader who was the ablest man in Norway. He gave Hakon a good reception; and they made a league with each other, by which Hakon promised great power to Sigurd if he was made king. They assembled then a numerous Thing, and Sigurd the earl recommended Hakon's cause to the Thing, and proposed him to the bondes as king. Then Hakon himself

stood up and spoke; and the people said to each other, two and two, as they heard him, "Harald Harfager is come again, and grown young." The beginning of Hakon's speech was, that he offered himself to the bondes as king, and desired from them the title of king, and aid and forces to defend the kingdom. He promised, on the other hand, to make all the bondes udal-holders, and give every man udal rights to the land he lived on. This speech met such joyful applause, that the whole public cried and shouted that they would take him to be king. And so it was that the Throndhjem people took Hakon, who was then fifteen years old, for king; and he took a court or bodyguard, and servants, and proceeded through the country. The news reached the Uplands that the people in Throndhjem had taken to themselves a king, who in every respect was like King Harald Harfager,—with the difference, that Harald had made all the people of the land vassals, and unfree; but this Hakon wished well to every man, and offered the bondes to give them their udal rights again, which Harald had taken from them. All were rejoiced at this news, and it passed from mouth to mouth,—it flew, like fire in dry grass, through the whole land, and eastward to the land's end. Many bondes came from the Uplands to meet King Hakon. Some sent messengers, some tokens; and all to the same effect—that his men they would be: and the king received all thankfully.

2.—KING HAKON'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE COUNTRY.

Early in winter (935), the king went to the Uplands,

and summoned the people to a Thing; and there streamed all to him who could come. He was proclaimed king at every Thing; and then he proceeded eastward to Viken, where his brother's sons, Trygve and Gudrod, and many others, came unto him, and complained of the sorrow and evil his brother Eirik had wrought. The hatred to King Eirik grew more and more, the more liking all men took to King Hakon; and they got more boldness to say what they thought. King Hakon gave Trygve and Gudrod the title of kings, and the dominions which King Harald had bestowed on their fathers. Trygve got Ranrike and Vingulmark, and Gudrod, Vestfold; but as they were young, and in the years of childhood, he appointed able men to rule the land for them. He gave them the country on the same conditions as it had been given before,—that they should have half of the scat and revenues with him. Towards spring King Hakon returned north, over the Uplands, to Throndhjem.

3.—EIRIK'S DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY.

King Hakon, early in spring, collected a great army at Throndhjem, and fitted out ships. The people of Viken also had a great force on foot, and intended to join Hakon. King Eirik also levied people in the middle of the country; but it went badly with him to gather people, for the leading men left him, and went over to Hakon. As he saw himself not nearly strong enough to oppose Hakon, he sailed (935) out to the West sea with such men as would follow him. He first sailed to Orkney, and took many people with him from that country; and

then went south towards England, plundering in Scotland, and in the north parts of England, wherever he could land. Athelstan, the king of England, sent a message to Eirik, offering him dominions under him in England; saying that King Harald his father was a good friend of King Athelstan, and therefore he would do kindly towards his sons. Messengers passed between the two kings; and it came to an agreement that King Eirik should take Northumberland as a fief from King Athelstan, and which land he should defend against the Danes or other vikings. Eirik should let himself be baptized, together with his wife and children, and all the people who had followed him. Eirik accepted this offer, and was baptized, and adopted the right faith. Northumberland is called a fifth part of England. Eirik had his residence at York, where Lodbrok's sons, it was said, had formerly been, and Northumberland was principally inhabited by Northmen. Since Lodbrok's sons had taken the country, Danes and Northmen often plundered there, when the power of the land was out of their hands. Many names of places in the country are Norwegian; as Grimsby, Haukfliot, and many others.

4.—EIRIK'S DEATH.

King Eirik had many people about him, for he kept many Northmen who had come with him from the East; and also many of his friends had joined him from Norway. But as he had little land, he went on a cruise every summer, and plundered in Scotland, the Hebrides, Ireland,

and Bretland, by which he gathered property. King Athelstan died on a sick bed, after a reign of fourteen years, eight weeks, and three days. After him his brother Jatmund was king of England, and he was no friend to the Northmen. King Eirik, also, was in no great favour with him; and the word went about that King Jatmund would set another chief over Northumberland. Now when King Eirik heard this, he set off on a viking cruise to the westward; and from the Orkneys took with him the Earls Arnkel and Erlend, the sons of Earl Torfeinar. Then he sailed to the Hebrides, where there were many vikings and troop-kings, who joined their men to his. With all this force he steered to Ireland first, where he took with him all the men he could, and then to Bretland, and plundered; and sailed thereafter south to England, and marauded there as elsewhere. The people fled before him wherever he appeared. As King Eirik was a bold warrior, and had a great force, he trusted so much to his people that he penetrated far inland in the country, following and plundering the fugitives. King Jatmund had set a king, who was called Olaf, to defend the land; and he gathered an innumerable mass of people, with whom he marched against King Eirik. A dreadful battle ensued, in which many Englishmen fell; but for one who fell came three in his place out of the country behind, and when evening came on the loss of men turned on the side of the Northmen, and many people fell. Towards the end of the day, King Eirik and five kings with him fell. Three of them were Guthorm and his two sons, Ivar and Harek: there fell, also, Sigurd

and Ragnvald; and with them Torfeinar's two sons, Arnkel and Erlend. Besides these, there was a great slaughter of Northmen; and those who escaped went to Northumberland, and brought the news to Gunhild and her sons (941).

5.—GUNHILD AND HER SONS.

When Gunhild and her sons knew for certain that King Eirik had fallen, after having plundered the land of the King of England, they thought there was no peace to be expected for them; and they made themselves ready to depart from Northumberland, with all the ships King Eirik had left, and all the men who would go with them. They took also all the loose property, and goods which they had gathered partly as taxes in England, partly as booty on their expeditions. With their army they first steered northward to Orkney, where Thorfin Hausakljufer was earl, a son of Torfeinar, and took up their station there for a time. Eirik's sons subdued these islands and Hjaltland, took scat for themselves, and staid there all the winter; but went on viking cruises in summer to the West, and plundered in Scotland and Ireland. About this Glum Geirason sings:—

"The hero who knows well to ride
The sea-horse o'er the foaming tide,—
He who in boyhood wild rode o'er
The seaman's horse to Skanea's shore,
And showed the Danes his galley's bow,
Right nobly scours the ocean now.
On Scotland's coast he lights the brand
Of flaming war; with conquering hand
Drives many a Scottish warrior tall
To the bright seats in Odin's hall.
The fire-spark, by the fiend of war
Fanned to a flame, soon spreads afar.
Crowds trembling fly,—the southern foes
Fall thick beneath the hero's blows:
The hero's blade drips red with gore,
Staining the green sward on the shore."

6.—BATTLE IN JUTLAND.

When King Eirik had left the country, King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, subdued the whole of Norway. The first winter (936) he visited the western parts, and then went north, and settled in Throndhjem. But as no peace could be reasonably looked for so long as King Eirik with his forces could come to Norway from the West sea, he set himself with his men-at-arms in the middle of the country,—in the Fjord district, or in Sogn, or Hordaland, or Rogaland. Hakon placed Sigurd earl of Hlader over the whole Throndhjem district, as he and his father had before had it under Harald Harfager. When King Hakon heard of his brother Eirik's death, and also that his sons had no footing in England, he thought there was not much to fear from them, and he went with his troops one summer eastward to Viken. At that time the Danes plundered often in Viken, and wrought much evil there; but when they heard that King Hakon was come with a great army, they got out of the way, to Halland; and those who were nearest to King Hakon went out to sea, and over to Jotland (Jutland). When the king heard of this, he sailed after them with all his army. On arriving in Jutland he plundered all round; and when the country people heard of it, they assembled in a great body, and determined to defend their land, and fight. There was a great battle; and King Hakon fought so boldly, that he went forward before his banner without helmet or coat of mail. King Hakon won the victory, and drove the fugitives far up the country. So says Guthorm Sindre, in his song of Hakon:—

"Furrowing the deep-blue sea with oars,
The king pursues to Jutland's shores.
They met; and in the battle storm
Of clashing shields, full many a form
Of goodly warrior on the plain,
Full many a corpse by Hakon slain,
Glutted the ravens, who from far,
Scenting the banquet-feast of war,
Came in black flocks to Jutland's plains
To drink the blood-wine from the veins."

7.—BATTLE IN EYRARSUND (THE SOUND).

Then Hakon steered southwards with his fleet to seek the vikings, and so on to Sealand. He rowed with two cutters into the Eyrarsund, where he found eleven viking ships, and instantly attacked them. It ended in his gaining the victory, and clearing the viking ships of all their men. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

"Hakon the Brave, whose skill all know
To bend in battle storm the bow,
Rushed o'er the waves to Sealand's tongue,
His two war-ships with gilt shields hung,
And cleared the decks with his blue sword
That rules the fate of war, on board
Eleven ships of the Vindland men,—
Famous is Hakon's name since then."

8.—KING HAKON'S EXPEDITION TO DENMARK.

Thereafter King Hakon carried war far and wide in Sealand; plundering some, slaying others, taking some prisoners of war, taking ransom from others,—and all without opposition. Then Hakon proceeded along the coast of Skane, pillaging everywhere, levying taxes and ransoms from the country, and killing all vikings, both Danish and Vindish. He then went eastwards to the district of Gautland, marauded there, and took great ransom from the country. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

"Hakon, who midst the battle shock
Stands like a firmly-rooted oak,
Subdued all Sealand with the sword;
From Vindland vikings the sea-bord
Of Scania swept; and, with the shield
Of Odin clad, made Gautland yield
A ransom of the ruddy gold,
Which Hakon to his war-men bold
Gave with free hand, who in his feud
Against the arrow-storm had stood."

King Hakon returned back in autumn with his army and an immense booty; and remained all the winter (946) in Viken to defend it against the Danes and Gautlanders, if they should attack it.

9.—OF KING TRYGVE.

In the same winter King Trygve Olafson returned from a viking cruise in the West sea, having before ravaged in Ireland and Scotland. In spring (946) King Hakon went north, and set his brother's son, King Trygve, over Viken to defend that country against enemies. He gave him also in property all that he could reconquer of the country in Denmark, which the summer before King Hakon had subjected to payment of scat to him. So says Guthorm:—

"King Hakon, whose sharp sword dyes red
The bright steel cap on many a head,
Has set a warrior brave and stout
The foreign foeman to keep out,—
To keep that green land safe from war
Which black Night bore to dwarf Annar.[1]
For many a carle whose trade's to wield
The battle-axe, and swing the shield,
On the swan's ocean-skates has come,
In white-winged ships, across the foam,—
Across the sea, from far Ireland,
To war against the Norseman's land."

10.—OF GUNHILD'S SONS.

King Harald Gormson ruled over Denmark at that time. He took it much amiss that King Hakon had made war in his dominions, and the report went that he would take revenge; but this did not take place so soon. When Gunhild and her sons heard there was enmity between Denmark and Norway, they began to turn their course

[1]The dwarf Annar was the husband of Night, and Earth was their daughter.—L.

from the West. They married King Eirik's daughter, Ragnhild, to Arnfin, a son of Thorfin Hausakljufer; and as soon as Eirik's sons went away, Thorfin took the earldom again over the Orkney Islands. Gamle Eirikson was somewhat older than the other brothers, but still he was not a grown man. When Gunhild and her sons came from the westward to Denmark, they were well received by King Harald. He gave them great fiefs in his kingdom, so that they could maintain themselves and their men very well. He also took Harald Eirikson to be his foster-son, set him on his knee, and thereafter he was brought up at the Danish king's court. Some of Eirik's sons went out on viking expeditions as soon as they were old enough, and gathered property, ravaging all around in the East sea. They grew up quickly to be handsome men, and far beyond their years in strength and perfection. Glum Geirason tells of one of them in the Grafeld song:—

"I've heard that, on the Eastland coast,
Great victories were won and lost.
The king, whose hand is ever graced
With gift to skald, his banner placed
On, and still on; while, midst the play
Of swords, sung sharp his good sword's sway,
As strong in arm as free of gold,
He thinn'd the ranks of warriors bold."

Then Eirik's sons turned northwards with their troops to Viken and marauded there; but King Trygve kept troops on foot with which he met them, and they had many a battle, in which the victory was sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other. Sometimes Eirik's sons plundered in Viken, and sometimes Trygve in Sealand and Halland.

11.—KING HAKON AS A LAW-GIVER.

As long as Hakon was king in Norway, there was good peace between the bondes and merchants; so that none did harm either to the life or goods of the other. Good seasons also there were, both by sea and land. King Hakon was of a remarkably cheerful disposition, clever in words, and very condescending. He was a man of great understanding also, and bestowed attention on law-giving. He gave out the Gula-thing's laws on the advice of Thorleif Spake (the Wise); also the Frosta-thing's laws on the advice of Earl Sigurd, and of other Throndhjem men of wisdom. Eidsiva-thing laws were first established in the country by Halfdan the Black, as has before been written.

12.—THE BIRTH OF EARL HAKON THE GREAT.

King Hakon kept Yule at Throndhjem, and Earl Sigurd had made a feast for him at Hlader. The night of the first day of Yule the earl's wife, Bergljot, was brought to bed of a boy-child, which afterwards King Hakon poured water over, and gave him his own name. The boy grew up, and became in his day a mighty and able man, and was earl after his father, who was King Hakon's dearest friend.

13.—OF EYSTEIN THE BAD.

Eystein, a king of the Uplands, whom some called the Great, and some the Bad, once on a time made war in Throndhjem, and subdued Eyna district and Spar-

byggia district, and set his own son Onund over them; but the Throndhjem people killed him. Then King Eystein made another inroad into Throndhjem, and ravaged the land far and wide, and subdued it. He then offered the people either his slave, who was called Thorer Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Saur, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with three men's wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for him, and his courtiers carried him on their shoulders when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. He dwelt on Eyin Idre (Idre Isle), and had his mansion in a place now called Saurshaug. It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him into pieces. Many other extraordinary things were done by this King Eystein against the Throndhjem people, and in consequence of this persecution and trouble, many chiefs and people fled and left their udal properties.

14.—JAMTALAND AND HELSINGJALAND.

Ketil Jamte, a son of Earl Onund of Sparabu, went eastward across the mountain ridge, and with him a great multitude, who took all their farm-stock and goods with them. They cleared the woods, and established large

farms, and settled the country afterwards called Jamtaland. Thorer Helsing, Ketil's grandson, on account of a murder, ran away from Jamtaland and fled eastward through the forest, and settled there. Many people followed; and that country, which extends eastward down to the sea-coast, was called Helsingjaland; and its eastern parts are inhabited by Swedes. Now when Harald Harfager took possession of the whole country many people fled before him, both people of Throndhjem and of Naumudal districts; and thus new settlers came to Jamtaland, and some all the way to Helsingjaland. The Helsingjaland people travelled into Svithiod for their merchandise, and thus became altogether subjects of that country. The Jamtaland people, again, were in a manner between the two countries; and nobody cared about them, until Hakon entered into friendly intercourse with Jamtaland, and made friends of the more powerful people. Then they resorted to him, and promised him obedience and payment of taxes, and became his subjects; for they saw nothing but what was good in him, and being of Norwegian race they would rather stand under his royal authority than under the king of Sweden: and he gave them laws, and rights to their land. All the people of Helsingjaland did the same,—that is, all who were of Norwegian race, from the other side of the great mountain ridge.

15.—HAKON SPREADS CHRISTIANITY.

King Hakon was a good Christian when he came to Norway; but as the whole country was heathen, with

much heathenish sacrifice, and as many great people, as well as the favour of the common people, were to be conciliated, he resolved to practise his Christianity in private. But he kept Sundays, and the Friday fasts, and some token of the greatest holy-days. He made a law that the festival of Yule should begin at the same time as Christian people held it, and that every man, under penalty, should brew a meal of malt into ale, and therewith keep the Yule holy as long as it lasted. Before him, the beginning of Yule, or the slaughter night, was the night of midwinter (Dec. 14), and Yule was kept for three days thereafter. It was his intent, as soon as he had set himself fast in the land, and had subjected the whole to his power, to introduce Christianity. He went to work first by enticing to Christianity the men who were dearest to him; and many, out of friendship to him, allowed themselves to be baptized, and some laid aside sacrifices. He dwelt long in the Throndhjem district, for the strength of the country lay there; and when he thought that, by the support of some powerful people there, he could set up Christianity he sent a message to England for a bishop and other teachers; and when they arrived in Norway, Hakon made it known that he would proclaim Christianity over all the land. The people of More and Raumsdal referred the matter to the people of Throndhjem. King Hakon then had several churches consecrated, and put priests into them; and when he came to Throndhjem he summoned the bondes to a Thing, and invited them to accept Christianity. They gave an answer to the effect that they would defer the matter until the Frosta-thing,

at which there would be men from every district of the Throndhjem country, and then they would give their determination upon this difficult matter.

16.—ABOUT SACRIFICES.

Sigurd, earl of Hlader, was one of the greatest men for sacrifices, and so had Hakon his father been; and Sigurd always presided on account of the king at all the festivals of sacrifice in the Throndhjem country. It was an old custom, that when there was to be sacrifice all the bondes should come to the spot where the temple stood, and bring with them all that they required while the festival of the sacrifice lasted. To this festival all the men brought ale with them; and all kinds of cattle, as well as horses, were slaughtered, and all the blood that came from them was called *hlaut,* and the vessels in which it was collected were called hlaut-vessels. Hlaut-staves were made, like sprinkling brushes, with which the whole of the altars and the temple walls, both outside and inside, were sprinkled over, and also the people were sprinkled with the blood; but the flesh was boiled into savoury meat for those present. The fire was in the middle of the floor of the temple, and over it hung the kettles, and the full goblets were handed across the fire; and he who made the feast, and was a chief, blessed the full goblets, and all the meat of the sacrifice. And first Odin's goblet was emptied for victory and power to his king; thereafter, Niord's and Freyja's goblets for peace and a good season. Then it was the custom of many to empty the

brage-goblet;[1] and then the guests emptied a goblet to the memory of departed friends, called the remembrance-goblet. Sigurd the earl was an open-handed man, who did what was very much celebrated; namely, he made a great sacrifice festival at Hlader of which he paid all the expenses. Kormak Ogmundson sings of it in his ballad of Sigurd:—

"Of cup or platter need has none
The guest who seeks the generous one,—
Sigurd the Generous, who can trace
His lineage from the giant race;
For Sigurd's hand is bounteous, free,—
The guardian of the temples he.
He loves the gods,—his liberal hand
Scatters his sword's gains o'er the land."

17.—THE FROSTA-THING.

King Hakon came to the Frosta-thing, at which a vast multitude of people were assembled. And when the Thing was seated, the king spoke to the people, and began his speech with saying,—it was his message and entreaty to the bondes and householding men, both great and small, and to the whole public in general, young and old, rich and poor, women as well as men, that they should all allow themselves to be baptized, and should believe in one God, and in Christ the son of Mary; and refrain from all sacrifices and heathen gods; and should keep holy the seventh day, and abstain from all work on it, and keep a fast on the seventh day. As soon as the king had proposed this to the bondes, great was the murmur and noise among the crowd. They complained that the king wanted to take their labour and their old faith from them, and the land could not be cultivated in that way. The

[1]The brage-goblet, over which vows were made.—L.

labouring men and slaves thought that they could not work if they did not get meat; and they said it was the character of King Hakon, and his father, and all the family, to be generous enough with their money, but sparing with their diet. Asbjorn of Medalhus in the Gaulardal stood up, and answered thus to the king's proposal:—

"We bondes, King Hakon, when we elected thee to be our king, and got back our udal rights at the Thing held in Throndhjem, thought we had got into heaven; but now we don't know whether we have really got back our freedom, or whether thou wishest to make vassals of us again by this extraordinary proposal—that we should abandon the ancient faith which our fathers and forefathers have held from the oldest times, in the times when the dead were burnt, as well as since that they are laid under mounds, and which, although they were braver than the people of our days, has served us as a faith to the present time. We have also held thee so dear, that we have allowed thee to rule and give law and right to all the country. And even now we bondes will unanimously hold by the law which thou givest us here in the Frosta-thing, and to which we have also given our assent; and we will follow thee, and have thee for our king, as long as there is a living man among us bondes here in this Thing assembled. But thou, king, must use some moderation towards us, and only require from us such things as we can obey thee in, and are not impossible for us. If, however, thou wilt take up this matter with a high hand, and wilt try thy power and strength against us, we bondes have resolved among ourselves to part

with thee, and to take to ourselves some other chief, who will so conduct himself towards us that we can freely and safely enjoy that faith that suits our own inclinations. Now, king, thou must choose one or other of these conditions before the Thing is ended."

The bondes gave loud applause to this speech, and said it expressed their will, and they would stand or fall by what had been spoken. When silence was again restored, Earl Sigurd said, "It is King Hakon's will to give way to you, the bondes, and never to separate himself from your friendship." The bondes replied, that it was their desire that the king should offer a sacrifice for peace and a good year, as his father was wont to do; and thereupon the noise and tumult ceased, and the Thing was concluded. Earl Sigurd spoke to the king afterwards, and advised him not to refuse altogether to do as the people desired, saying there was nothing else for it but to give way to the will of the bondes; "for it is, as thou hast heard thyself, the will and earnest desire of the head-people, as well as of the multitude. Hereafter we may find a good way to manage it." And in this resolution the king and earl agreed (950).

18.—KING HAKON OFFERS SACRIFICES.

The harvest thereafter, towards the winter season, there was a festival of sacrifice at Hlader, and the king came to it. It had always been his custom before, when he was present at a place where there was sacrifice, to take his meals in a little house by himself, or with some few

of his men; but the bondes grumbled that he did not seat himself in his high-seat at these the most joyous of the meetings of the people. The earl said that the king should do so this time. The king accordingly sat upon his high-seat. Now when the first full goblet was filled, Earl Sigurd spoke some words over it, blessed it in Odin's name, and drank to the king out of the horn; and the king then took it, and made the sign of the cross over it. Then said Kar of Gryting, "What does the king mean by doing so? Will he not sacrifice?" Earl Sigurd replies, "The king is doing what all of you do, who trust to your power and strength. He is blessing the full goblet in the name of Thor, by making the sign of his hammer over it before he drinks it." On this there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bondes pressed the king strongly to eat of horse-flesh;[1] and as he would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came and made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse-flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the high-seat; but neither party was satisfied with this.

[1]This eating of horse-flesh at these religious festivals was considered the most direct proof of paganism in the following times, and was punished by death or mutilation by Saint Olaf. It was a ceremony apparently commemorative of their Asiatic origin and ancestors.

19.—FEAST OF THE SACRIFICE AT MORE.

The winter thereafter the king prepared a Yule feast in More, and eight chiefs resolved with each other to meet at it. Four of them were from without the Throndhjem district—namely, Kar of Gryting, Asbjorn of Medalhus, Thorberg of Varnes, and Orm from Ljoxa; and from the Throndhjem district, Botolf of Olvishaug, Narfe of Staf in Veradal, Thrand Hak from Egg, and Thorer Skeg from Husaby in Eyin Idre. These eight men bound themselves, the four first to root out Christianity in Norway, and the four others to oblige the king to offer sacrifice to the gods. The four first went in four ships southwards to More, and killed three priests, and burnt three churches, and then they returned. Now, when King Hakon and Earl Sigurd came to More with their court, the bondes assembled in great numbers; and immediately, on the first day of the feast, the bondes insisted hard with the king that he should offer sacrifice, and threatened him with violence if he refused. Earl Sigurd tried to make peace between them, and brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse-liver, and emptied all the goblets the bondes filled for him without the sign of the cross; but as soon as the feast was over, the king and the earl returned to Hlader. The king was very ill pleased, and made himself ready to leave Throndhjem forthwith with all his people; saying that the next time he came to Throndhjem, he would come with such strength of men-at-arms that he would repay the bondes for their enmity towards him. Earl Sigurd entreated the

king not to take it amiss of the bondes; adding, that it was not wise to threaten them, or to make war upon the people within the country, and especially in the Throndhjem district, where the strength of the land lay; but the king was so enraged that he would not listen to a word from anybody. He went out from Throndhjem, and proceeded south to More, where he remained the rest of the winter, and on to the spring season (950); and when summer came he assembled men, and the report was that he intended with this army to attack the Throndhjem people.

20.—BATTLE AT OGVALDSNES.

But just as the king had embarked with a great force of troops, the news was brought him from the south of the country, that King Eirik's sons had come from Denmark to Viken and had driven King Trygve Olafson from his ships at Sotanes, and then had plundered far and wide around in Viken, and that many had submitted to them. Now when King Hakon heard this news, he thought that help was needed; and he sent word to Earl Sigurd, and to the other chiefs from whom he could expect help, to hasten to his assistance. Sigurd the earl came accordingly with a great body of men, among whom were all the Throndhjem people who had set upon him the hardest to offer sacrifice; and all made their peace with the king, by the earl's persuasion. Now King Hakon sailed south along the coast; and when he came south as far as Stad, he heard that Eirik's sons were come to North Agder.

Then they advanced against each other, and met at Kormt. Both parties left their ships there, and gave battle at Ogvaldsnes. Both parties had a great force, and it was a great battle. King Hakon went forward bravely, and King Guthorm Eirikson met him with his troop, and they exchanged blows with each other. Guthorm fell, and his standard was cut down. Many people fell around him. The army of Eirik's sons then took flight to their ships, and rowed away with the loss of many a man. So says Guthorm Sindre:—

"The king's voice waked the silent host
Who slept beside the wild sea-coast,
And bade the song of spear and sword
Over the battle plain be heard.
Where heroes' shields the loudest rang,
Where loudest was the sword-blade's clang,
By the sea-shore at Kormt Sound,
Hakon felled Guthorm to the ground."

Now King Hakon returned to his ships, and pursued Gunhild's sons. And both parties sailed all they could sail, until they came to East Adger, from whence Eirik's sons set out to sea, and southwards for Jutland (950). Guthorm Sindre speaks of it in his song:—

"And Guthorm's brothers too, who know
So skilfully to bend the bow,
The conquering hand must also feel
Of Hakon, god of the bright steel,—
The sun-god, whose bright rays, that dart
Flame-like, are swords that pierce the heart.
Well I remember how the King
Hakon, the battle's life and spring,
O'er the wide ocean cleared away
Eirik's brave sons. They durst not stay,
But round their ships' sides hung their shields,
And fled across the blue sea-fields."

King Hakon returned then northwards to Norway, but Eirik's sons remained a long time in Denmark.

21.—KING HAKON'S LAWS.

King Hakon after this battle made a law, that all inhabited land over the whole country along the sea-coast,

and as far back from it as the salmon swims up in the rivers, should be divided into ship-raths according to the districts; and it was fixed by law how many ships there should be from each district, and how great each should be, when the whole people were called out on service. For this outfit the whole inhabitants should be bound, whenever a foreign army came to the country. With this came also the order that beacons should be erected upon the hills, so that every man could see from the one to the other; and it is told that a war-signal could thus be given in seven days, from the most southerly beacon to the most northerly Thing-seat in Halogaland.

22.—CONCERNING EIRIK'S SONS.

Eirik's sons plundered much on the Baltic coasts, and sometimes, as before related, in Norway; but so long as Hakon ruled over Norway there was in general good peace, and good seasons, and he was the most beloved of kings. When Hakon had reigned about twenty years in Norway (954), Eirik's sons came from Denmark with a powerful army, of which a great part consisted of the people who had followed them on their expeditions; but a still greater army of Danes had been placed at their disposal by King Harald Gormson. They sailed with a fair wind from Vendil, and came to Agder; and then sailed northwards, night and day, along the coast. But the beacons were not fired, because it had been usual to look for them lighted from the east onwards, and nobody had observed them from the east coast; and besides King

Hakon had set heavy penalties for giving false alarm, by lighting the beacons without occasion. The reason of this was, that ships of war and vikings cruised about and plundered among the outlying islands, and the country people took them for Eirik's sons, and lighted the beacons, and set the whole country in trouble and dread of war. Sometimes, no doubt, the sons of Eirik were there; but having only their own troops, and no Danish army with them, they returned to Denmark; and sometimes these were other vikings. King Hakon was very angry at this, because it cost both trouble and money to no purpose. The bondes also suffered by these false alarms when they were given uselessly; and thus it happened that no news of this expedition of Eirik's sons circulated through the land until they had come as far north as Ulfasund, where they lay for seven days. Then spies set off across Eid and northwards to More. King Hakon was at that time in the island Frede, in North More, at a place called Birkistrand, where he had a dwelling-house, and had no troops with him, only his bodyguard or court, and the neighbouring bondes he had invited to his house.

23.—OF EGIL ULSERK.

The spies came to King Hakon, and told him that Eirik's sons, with a great army, lay just to the south of Stad. Then he called together the most understanding of the men about him, and asked their opinion, whether he should fight with Eirik's sons, although they had such

a great multitude with them, or should set off northwards to gather together more men. Now there was a bonde there, by name Egil Ulserk, who was a very old man, but in former days had been strong and stout beyond most men, and a hardy man-at-arms withal, having long carried King Harald Harfager's banner. Egil answered thus to the king's speech,—"I was in several battles with thy father Harald the king, and he gave battle sometimes with many, sometimes with few people; but he always came off with victory. Never did I hear him ask counsel of his friends whether he should fly—and neither shalt thou get any such counsel from us, king; but as we know we have a brave leader, thou shalt get a trusty following from us." Many others agreed with this speech, and the king himself declared he was most inclined to fight with such strength as they could gather. It was so determined. The king split up a war-arrow, which he sent off in all directions, and by that token a number of men was collected in all haste. Then said Egil Ulserk,—"At one time the peace had lasted so long I was afraid I might come to die the death of old age,[1] within doors upon a bed of straw, although I would rather fall in battle following my chief. And now it may so turn out in the end as I wished it to be."

24.—BATTLE AT FREDARBERG.

Eirik's sons sailed northwards around Stad, as soon as the wind suited; and when they had passed it, and heard

[1] In all the sagas of this pagan time, the dying on a bed of sickness is mentioned as a kind of derogatory end of a man of any celebrity.—L.

where King Hakon was, they sailed to meet him. King Hakon had nine ships, with which he lay under Fredarberg in Feeysund; and Eirik's sons had twenty ships, with which they brought up on the south side of the same cape, in Feeysund. King Hakon sent them a message, asking them to go upon the land; and telling them that he had hedged in with hazel boughs a place of combat at Rastarkalf, where there is a flat large field, at the foot of a long and rather low ridge. Then Eirik's sons left their ships, and went northwards over the neck of land within Fredarberg, and onward to Rastarkalf. Then Egil asked King Hakon to give him ten men with ten banners, and the king did so. Then Egil went with his men under the ridge; but King Hakon went out upon the open field with his army, and set up his banner, and drew up his army, saying, "Let us draw up in a long line, that they may not surround us, as they have the most men." And so it was done; and there was a severe battle, and a very sharp attack. Then Egil Ulserk set up the ten banners he had with him, and placed the men who carried them so that they should go as near the summit of the ridge as possible, and leaving a space between each of them. They went so near the summit that the banners could be seen over it, and moved on as if they were coming behind the army of Eirik's sons. Now when the men who stood uppermost in the line of the troops of Eirik's sons saw so many flying banners advancing high over the edge of the ridge, they supposed a great force must be following, who would come behind their army, and between them and their ships. They made each other

acquainted with what was going on in a loud shout, and the whole took to flight; and when the king saw it, they fled with the rest. King Hakon now pushes on briskly with his people, pursuing the flying, and killing many.

25.—OF KING GAMLE.

When Gamle Eirikson came up the ridge of the hill he turned round, and he observed that not more people were following than his men had been engaged with already, and he saw it was but a stratagem of war; so he ordered the war-horns to be blown, his banner to be set up, and he put his men in battle order. On this, all his Northmen stood, and turned with him, but the Danes fled to the ships; and when King Hakon and his men came thither, there was again a sharp conflict; but now Hakon had most people. At last the Eirik's sons' force fled, and took the road south about the hill; but a part of their army retreated upon the hill southwards, followed by King Hakon. There is a flat field east of the ridge which runs westward along the range of hills, and is bounded on its west side by a steep ridge. Gamle's men retreated towards this ground; but Hakon followed so closely that he killed some, and others ran west over the ridge, and were killed on that side of it. King Hakon did not part with them till the last man of them was killed.

26.—KING GAMLE AND ULSERK FALL.

Gamle Eirikson fled from the ridge down upon the plain to the south of the hill. There he turned himself

again, and waited until more people gathered to him. All his brothers, and many troops of their men, assembled there. Egil Ulserk was in front, and in advance of Hakon's men, and made a stout attack. He and King Gamle exchanged blows with each other, and King Gamle got a grievous wound; but Egil fell, and many people with him. Then came Hakon the king with the troops which had followed him, and a new battle began. King Hakon pushed on, cutting down men on both sides of him, and killing the one upon the top of the other. So sings Guthorm Sindre:—

"Scared by the sharp sword's singing sound,
Brandished in air, the foe gave ground.
The boldest warrior cannot stand
Before King Hakon's conquering hand;
And the king's banner ever flies
Where the spear-forests thickest rise.
Altho' the king had gained of old
Enough of Freyja's tears of gold,[1]
He spared himself no more than tho'
He'd had no well-filled purse to show."

When Eirik's sons saw their men falling all round, they turned and fled to their ships; but those who had sought the ships before had pushed off some of them from the land, while some of them were still hauled up and on the strand. Now the sons of Eirik and their men plunged into the sea, and betook themselves to swimming. Gamle Eirikson was drowned; but the other sons of Eirik reached their ships, and set sail with what men remained. They steered southwards to Denmark, where they stopped a while, very ill satisfied with their expedition.

[1]Freyja's husband was Od; and her tears, when she wept at the long absence of her husband, were tears of gold. Od's wife's tears is the skald's expression here for gold—understood, no doubt, as readily as any allusion to Plutus would convey the equivalent meaning in modern poetry.—L.

27.—EGIL ULSERK'S BURIAL-GROUND.

King Hakon took all the ships of the sons of Eirik that had been left upon the strand, and had them drawn quite up, and brought on the land. Then he ordered that Egil Ulserk, and all the men of his army who had fallen, should be laid in the ships, and covered entirely over with earth and stones. King Hakon made many of the ships to be drawn up to the field of battle, and the hillocks over them are to be seen to the present day a little to the south of Fredarberg. At the time when King Hakon was killed, when Glum Geirason, in his song, boasted of King Hakon's fall, Eyvind Skaldaspiller composed these verses on this battle:—

"Our dauntless king with Gamle's gore
Sprinkled his bright sword o'er and o'er;
Sprinkled the gag that holds the mouth
Of the fell demon Fenriswolf.[1]
Proud swelled our warriors' hearts when he
Drove Eirik's sons out to the sea,
With all their Gautland host: but now
Our warriors weep—Hakon lies low!"

High standing stones mark Egil Uslerk's grave.

28.—NEWS OF WAR COMES TO KING HAKON.

When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, had been king for twenty-six years after his brother Eirik had left the country, it happened (960) that he was at a feast in Hordaland in the house at Fitjar on the island Stord, and he had with him at the feast his court and many of the peasants. And just as the king was seated at the supper-table, his watchmen who were outside observed

[1]The Fenriswolf, one of the children of Loke, begotten with a gaintess, was chained to a rock, and gagged by a sword placed in his mouth, to prevent him devouring mankind. Fenriswolf's gag is a skaldic expression for a sword.—L.

many ships coming sailing along from the south, and not very far from the island. Now, said the one to the other, they should inform the king that they thought an armed force was coming against them; but none thought it advisable to be the bearer of an alarm of war to the king, as he had set heavy penalties on those who raised such alarms falsely, yet they thought it unsuitable that the king should remain in ignorance of what they saw. Then one of them went into the room and asked Eyvind Finson to come out as fast as possible, for it was very needful. Eyvind immediately came out and went to where he could see the ships, and saw directly that a great army was on the way; and he returned in all haste into the room, and, placing himself before the king, said, "Short is the hour for acting, and long the hour for feasting." The king cast his eyes upon him, and said, "What now is in the way?" Eyvind said—

"Up king! the avengers are at hand!
Eirik's bold sons approach the land!
The judgment of the sword they crave
Against their foe. Thy wrath I brave;
Tho' well I know 'tis no light thing
To bring war-tidings to the king,
And tell him 'tis no time to rest.
Up! gird your armour to your breast:
Thy honour's dearer than my life;
Therefore I say, up to the strife!"

Then said the king, "Thou art too brave a fellow, Eyvind, to bring us any false alarm of war." The others all said it was a true report. The king ordered the tables to be removed, and then he went out to look at the ships; and when it could be clearly seen that these were ships of war, the king asked his men what resolution they should take—whether to give battle with the men they had, or go on board ship and sail away northwards along the land. "For it is easy to see," said he, "that we must now fight

against a much greater force than we ever had against us before; although we thought just the same the last time we fought against Gunhild's sons." No one was in a hurry to give an answer to the king; but at last Eyvind replied to the king's speech:—

"Thou who in the battle-plain
Hast often poured the sharp spear-rain!
Ill it beseems our warriors brave
To fly upon the ocean wave:
To fly upon the blue wave north,
When Harald from the south comes forth,
With many a ship riding in pride
Upon the foaming ocean-tide;
With many a ship and southern viking,—
Let us take shield in hand, brave king!"

The king replied, "Thy counsel, Eyvind, is manly, and after my own heart; but I will hear the opinion of others upon this matter." Now as the king's men thought they discerned what way the king was inclined to take, they answered that they would rather fall bravely and like men, than fly before the Danes; adding, that they had often gained the victory against greater odds of numbers. The king thanked them for their resolution, and bade them arm themselves; and all the men did so. The king put on his armour, and girded on his sword Kvernbit, and put a gilt helmet upon his head, and took a spear (Kesja) in his hand, and a shield by his side. He then drew up his courtmen and the bondes in one body, and set up his banner.

29.—THE ARMAMENT OF EIRIK'S SONS.

After Gamle's death King Harald, Eirik's son, was the chief of the brothers, and he had a great army with him from Denmark. In their army were also their moth-

er's brothers,—Eyvind Skreyja, and Alf Askman, both strong and able men, and great man slayers. The sons of Eirik brought up with their ships off the island, and it is said that their force was not less than six to one,—so much stronger in men were Eirik's sons.

30.—KING HAKON'S BATTLE ARRAY.

When King Hakon had drawn up his men, it is told of him that he threw off his armour before the battle began. So sings Eyvind Skaldaspiller, in Hakmarmal.:—

"They found Biorn's brother bold
Under his banner as of old,
Ready for battle. Foes advance,—
The front rank raise the shining lance;
And now begins the bloody fray!
Now! now begins Hild's wild play!
Our noble king, whose name strikes fear
Into each Danish heart,—whose spear
Has single-handed split the blood
Of many a Danish noble,—stood
Beneath his helmet's eagle wing
Amidst his guards; but the brave king
Scorned to wear armour, while his men
Bared naked breasts against the rain
Of spear and arrow. Off he flung
His coat of mail, his breast-plate rung
Against the stones; and, blithe and gay,
He rushed into the thickest fray.
With golden helm, and naked breast,
Brave Hakon played at slaughter's feast."

King Hakon selected willingly such men for his guard or court-men as were distinguished for their strength and bravery, as his father King Harald also used to do; and among these was Thoralf Skolmson the Strong, who went on one side of the king. He had helmet and shield, spear and sword; and his sword was called by the name of Footbreadth. It was said that Thoralf and King Hakon were equal in strength. Thord Sjarekson speaks of it in the poem he composed concerning Thoralf:—

"The king's men went with merry words
To the sharp clash of shields and swords,
When these wild rovers of the sea
At Fitjar fought. Stout Thoralf he
Next to the Northmen's hero came,
Scattering wide round the battle flame
For in the storm of shields not one
Ventured like him with brave Hakon."

When both lines met there was a hard combat, and much bloodshed. The combatants threw their spears and then drew their swords. Then King Hakon, and Thoralf with him, went in advance of the banner, cutting down on both sides of them. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"The body-coats of linked steel,
The woven iron coats of mail,
Like water fly before the swing
Of Hakon's sword—the champion-king.
About each Gotland war-man's head
Helm splits, like ice beneath the tread,
Cloven by the axe or sharp sword-blade.
The brave king, foremost in the fight,
Dyes crimson-red the spotless white
Of his bright shield with foemen's gore,—
Amidst the battle's wild uproar.
Wild pealing round from shore to shore."

31.—FALL OF SKREYJA AND ASKMAN.

King Hakon was very conspicuous among other men, and also when the sun shone his helmet glanced, and thereby many weapons were directed at him. Then Eyvind Finson took a hat and put it over the king's helmet. Now Eyvind Skreyja called out, "Does the king of the Norsemen hide himself, or has he fled? Where is now the golden helmet?" Then Eyvind, and his brother Alf with him, pushed on like fools or madmen. King Hakon shouted to Eyvind, "Come on as thou art coming, and thou shalt find the king of the Norsemen." So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"The raiser of the storm of shields,
The conqueror in battle fields,—
Hakon the brave, the warrior's friend,
Who scatters gold with liberal hand,
Heard Skreyja's taunt, and saw him rush
Amidst the sharp spears' thickest push,
And loudly shouted in reply—
'If thou wilt for the victory try,
The Norseman's king thou soon shalt find!
Hold onwards, friend! Hast thou a mind!'"

It was also but a short space of time before Eyvind did come up swinging his sword, and made a cut at the

king; but Thoralf thrust his shield so hard against Eyvind that he tottered with the shock. Now the king takes his sword Kvernbit with both hands, and hewed Eyvind through helm and head, and clove him down to the shoulders. Thoralf also slew Alf Askman. So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller:—

"With both his hands the gallant king
Swung round his sword, and to the chin
Clove Eyvind down: his faithless mail
Against it could no more avail,
Than the thin plank against the shock
When the ship's side beats on the rock.
By his bright sword with golden haft
Thro' helm, and head, and hair, was cleft
The Danish champion; and amain,
With terror smitten, fled his men."

After this fall of the two brothers, King Hakon pressed on so hard that all men gave way before his assault. Now fear came over the army of Eirik's sons, and the men began to fly; and King Hakon, who was at the head of his men, pressed on the flying, and hewed down oft and hard. Then flew an arrow, one of the kind called *flein*, into Hakon's arm, into the muscles below the shoulder; and it is said by many people that Gunhild's shoe-boy, whose name was Kisping, ran out and forwards amidst the confusion of arms, called out "Make room for the king-killer," and shot King Hakon with the *flein*. Others again say that nobody could tell who shot the king, which is indeed the most likely; for spears, arrows, and all kinds of missiles flew as thick as a snow-drift. Many of the people of Eirik's sons were killed, both on the field of battle and on the way to the ships, and also on the strand, and many threw themselves into the water. Many also, among whom were Eirik's sons, got on board their ships, and rowed away as fast as they

could, and Hakon's men after them. So says Thord Sjarekson:—

"The wolf, the murderer, and the thief,
Fled from before the people's chief:
Few breakers of the peace grew old
Under the Northmen's king so bold.
When gallant Hakon lost his life
Black was the day, and dire the strife.
It was bad work for Gunhild's sons,
Leading their pack of hungry Danes
From out the south, to have to fly,
And many a bonde leave to die,
Leaning his heavy wounded head
On the oar-bench for feather-bed.
Thoralf was nearest to the side
Of gallant Hakon in the tide
Of battle; his the sword that best
Carved out the raven's bloody feast:
Amidst the heaps of foemen slain
He was named bravest on the plain."

32.—HAKON'S DEATH.

When King Hakon came out to his ship he had his wound bound up; but the blood ran from it so much and so constantly, that it could not be stopped; and when the day was drawing to an end his strength began to leave him. Then he told his men that he wanted to go northwards to his house at Alreksstader; but when he came north, as far as Hakonarhella Hill, they put in towards the land, for by this time the king was almost lifeless. Then he called his friends around him, and told them what he wished to be done with regard to his kingdom. He had only one child, a daughter, called Thora, and had no son. Now he told them to send a message to Eirik's sons, that they should be kings over the country; but asked them to hold his friends in respect and honour. "And if fate," added he, "should prolong my life, I will, at any rate, leave the country, and go to a Christian land, and do penance for what I have done against God; but should I die in heathen land, give me any burial you think fit." Shortly afterwards Hakon expired, at the little hill on the shore-side at which he was born. So great

was the sorrow over Hakon's death, that he was lamented both by friends and enemies; and they said that never again would Norway see such a king. His friends removed his body to Sæheim, in North Hordaland, and made a great mound, in which they laid the king in full armour and in his best clothes, but with no other goods. They spoke over his grave, as heathen people are used to do, and wished him in Valhal. Eyvind Skaldaspiller composed a poem on the death of King Hakon, and on how well he was received in Valhal. The poem is called "Hakonarmal:"—

"In Odin's hall an empty place
Stands for a king of Yngve's race;
'Go, my valkyries,' Odin said,
'Go forth, my angels of the dead,
Gondul and Skogul, to the plain
Drenched with the battle's bloody rain,
And to the dying Hakon tell,
Here in Valhal shall he dwell.'

"At Stord, so late a lonely shore,
Was heard the battle's wild uproar;
The lightning of the flashing sword
Burned fiercely at the shore of Stord.
From levelled halberd and spear-head
Life-blood was dropping fast and red;
And the keen arrows' biting sleet
Upon the shore at Stord fast beat.

"Upon the thundering cloud of shield
Flashed bright the sword-storm o'er the field;
And on the plate-mail rattled loud
The arrow-shower's rushing cloud,
In Odin's tempest-weather, there
Swift whistling through the angry air;
And the spear-torrents swept away
Ranks of brave men from light of day.

"With batter'd shield, and blood-smear'd sword,
Sits one beside the shore of Stord,
With armour crushed and gashed sits he,
A grim and ghastly sight to see;
And round about in sorrow stand
The warriors of his gallant band:
Because the king of Dags' old race
In Odin's hall must fill a place.

"Then up spake Gondul, standing near,
Resting upon her long ash spear,—
'Hakon! the gods' cause prospers well,
And thou in Odin's halls shalt dwell!'
The king beside the shore of Stord
The speech of the valkyrie heard,
Who sat there on his coal-black steed,
With shield on arm and helm on head.

"Thoughtful, said Hakon, 'Tell me why,
Ruler of battles, victory
Is so dealt out on Stord's red plain?
Have we not well deserved to gain?'
'And is it not as well dealt out?'
Said Gondul. 'Hearest thou not the shout?
The field is cleared—the foemen run—
The day is ours—the battle won!'

"Then Skogul said, 'My coal-black steed,
Home to the gods I now must speed,
To their green home, to tell the tiding
That Hakon's self is thither riding.'
To Hermod and to Brage then
Said Odin, 'Here, the first of men,
Brave Hakon comes, the Norsemen's king,—
Go forth, my welcome to him bring.'

"Fresh from the battle-field came in,
Dripping with blood, the Norsemen's
king.
'Methinks,' said he, 'great Odin's will
Is harsh, and bodes me further ill:
Thy son from off the field to-day
From victory to snatch away!'
But Odin said, 'Be thine the joy
Valhal gives, my own brave boy!'

"And Brage said, 'Eight brothers
here
Welcome thee to Valhal's cheer,
To drain the cup, or fights repeat
Where Hakon Eirik's earls beat.'
Quoth the stout king, 'And shall my
gear,
Helm, sword, and mail-coat, axe and
spear,
Be still at hand! 'Tis good to hold
Fast by our trusty friends of old.'

"Well was it seen that Hakon still
Had saved the temples from all ill;[1]
For the whole council of the gods
Welcomed the king to their abodes.
Happy the day when men are born
Like Hakon, who all base things
scorn,—
Win from the brave an honoured
name,
And die amidst an endless fame.

"Sooner shall Fenriswolf devour
The race of man from shore to shore,
Than such a grace to kingly crown
As gallant Hakon want renown.
Life, land, friends, riches, all will fly,
And we in slavery shall sigh.
But Hakon in the blessed abodes
For ever lives with the bright gods."

[1]Hakon, although a Christian, appears to have favoured the old religion, and spared the temples of Odin, and therefore a place in Valhal is assigned him.—L.

SAGA OF KING HARALD GRAFELD AND OF EARL HAKON SON OF SIGURD.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THIS saga might be called Gunhild's Saga, as she is the chief person in it. The reign of King Harald and Earl Hakon is more fully described in the next saga, that is, Olaf Trygvason's. Other literature on this epoch:

Agrip (chap. 8). Historia Norvegiæ (p. 12). Thjodrek (chap. 5). Saxo (pp. 479-482). Egla (chaps. 81, 82). Floamanna (chap. 12). Fareyinga (chaps. 2, 4, 10). Halfred's Saga chap. 2). Hord Grimkelsons Saga (chaps. 13, 18). Kormak (chaps. 19-27). Laxdæla (chaps. 19-21). Njala (chaps, 3-6).

The skalds of this saga are:—Glum Geirason, Kormak Agmundson, Eyvind Skaldaspiller, and Einar Helgason Skalaglam.

1.—GOVERNMENT OF THE SONS OF EIRIK.

When King Hakon was killed, the sons of Eirik took the sovereignty of Norway. Harald, who was the oldest of the living brothers, was over them in dignity. Their mother Gunhild, who was called the King-mother, mixed herself much in the affairs of the country. There were many chiefs in the land at that time. There was Trygve Olafson in the Eastland, Gudrod Bjornson in Vestfold, Sigurd earl of Hlader in the Throndhjem land; but Gunhild's sons held the middle of the country the first winter. There went messages and ambassadors between Gunhild's sons and Trygve and Gudrod, and all was settled upon the footing that they should hold from Gunhild's sons the same part of the country which they formerly had held under King Hakon. A man called Glum Geirason,

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who was King Harald's skald, and was a very brave man, made this song upon King Hakon's death:—

"Gamle is avenged by Harald!
Great is thy deed, thou champion bold!
The rumour of it came to me
In distant lands beyond the sea,
How Harald gave King Hakon's blood
To Odin's ravens for their food."

This song was much favoured. When Eyvind Finson heard of it he composed the song which was given before, viz.:—

"Our dauntless king with Gamle's gore
Sprinkled his bright sword o'er and o'er," &c.

This song also was much favoured, and was spread widely abroad; and when King Harald came to hear of it, he laid a charge against Evyind affecting his life; but friends made up the quarrel, on the condition that Eyvind should in future be Harald's skald, as he had formerly been King Hakon's. There was also some relationship between them, as Gunhild, Eyvind's mother, was a daughter of Earl Halfdan, and her mother was Ingibjorg, a daughter of Harald Harfager. Thereafter Eyvind made a song about King Harald:—

"Guardian of Norway, well we know
Thy heart failed not when from the bow
The piercing arrow-hail sharp rang
On shield and breast-plate, and the clang
Of sword resounded in the press
Of battle, like the splitting ice;
For Harald, wild wolf of the wood,
Must drink his fill of foeman's blood."

Gunhild's sons resided mostly in the middle of the country, for they did not think it safe for them to dwell among the people of Throndhjem or of Viken, where King Hakon's best friends lived; and also in both places there were many powerful men. Proposals of agreement then passed between Gunhild's sons and Earl Sigurd, for they got no scat from the Throndhjem country; and at last

an agreement was concluded between the kings and the earl, and confirmed by oath. Earl Sigurd was to get the same power in the Throndhjem land which he had possessed under King Hakon, and on that they considered themselves at peace. All Gunhild's sons had the character of being penurious; and it was said they hid their money in the ground. Eyvind Skaldaspiller made a song about this:—

"Main-mast of battle! Harald bold!
In Hakon's days the skald wore gold
Upon his falcon's seat; he wore
Rolf Krake's seed, the yellow ore,
Sown by him as he fled away,
The avenger Adils' speed to stay.
The gold crop grows upon the plain;
But Frode's girls so gay[1] in vain
Grind out the golden meal, while those
Who rule o'er Norway's realm like foes,
In mother earth's old bosom hide
The wealth which Hakon far and wide
Scattered with generous hand: the sun
Shone in the days of that great one,
On the gold band of Fulla's brow,[2]
On gold-ringed hands that bend the bow,
On the skald's hand; but of the ray
Of bright gold, glancing like the spray
Of sun-lit waves, no skald now sings—
Buried are golden chains and rings."

Now when King Harald heard this song, he sent a message to Eyvind to come to him, and when Eyvind came made a charge against him of being unfaithful. "And it ill becomes thee," said the king, "to be my enemy, as thou hast entered into my service." Eyvind then made these verses:—

"One lord I had before thee, Harald!
One dear-loved lord! Now am I old,
And do not wish to change again,—
To that loved lord, through strife and pain,
Faithful I stood; still true to Hakon,—
To my good king, and him alone.
But now I'm old and useless grown,
My hands are empty, wealth is flown;
I am but fit for a short space
In thy court-hall to fill a place."

But King Harald forced Eyvind to submit himself to his clemency. Eyvind had a great gold ring, which

[1]Menja and Fenja were strong girls of the giant race, whom Frode bought in Sweden to grind gold and good luck to him; and their meal means gold.—L.

[2]Fulla was one of Frig's attendants, who wore a gold band on the forehead; and the figure means gold,—that the sun shone on gold rings on the hands of the skalds in Hakon's days.—L.

was called Molde, that had been dug up out of the earth long since. This ring the king said he must have as the mulct for the offence; and there was no help for it. Then Eyvind sang:—

"I go across the ocean-foam,
Swift skating to my Iceland home
Upon the ocean-skates, fast driven
By gales by Thurse's witch-wife given.

For from the falcon-bearing hand
Harald has plucked the gold snake band
My father wore—by lawless might
Has taken what is mine by right."

Eyvind went home; but it is not told that he ever came near the king again.

2.—CHRISTIANITY OF GUNHILD'S SONS.

Gunhild's sons embraced Christianity in England, as told before; but when they came to rule over Norway they made no progress in spreading Christianity—only they pulled down the temples of the idols, and cast away the sacrifices where they had it in their power, and raised great animosity by doing so. The good crops of the country were soon wasted in their days, because there were many kings, and each had his court about him. They had therefore great expenses, and were very greedy. Besides, they only observed those laws of King Hakon which suited themselves. They were, however, all of them remarkably handsome men—stout, strong, and expert in all exercises. So says Glum Geirason, in the verses he composed about Harald, Gunhild's son:—

"The foeman's terror, Harald bold,
Had gained enough of yellow gold;

Had Heimdal's teeth[1] enough in store,
And understood twelve arts or more."

The brothers sometimes went out on expeditions together, and sometimes each on his own account. They

[1]Heimdal was one of the gods, whose horse was called Gold-top; and the horse's teeth were of gold.

were fierce, but brave and active; and great warriors, and very successful.

3.—COUNCILS BY GUNHILD AND HER SONS.

Gunhild the King-mother, and her sons, often met, and talked together upon the government of the country. Once Gunhild asked her sons what they intended to do with their kingdom of Throndhjem. "Ye have the title of king, as your forefathers had before you; but ye have little land or people, and there are many to divide with. In the East, at Viken, there are Trygve and Gudrod; and they have some right, from relationship, to their governments. There is besides Earl Sigurd ruling over the whole Throndhjem country; and no reason can I see why ye let so large a kingdom be ruled by an earl, and not by yourselves. It appears wonderful to me that ye go every summer upon viking cruises against other lands, and allow an earl within the country to take your father's heritage from you. Your grandfather, whose name you bear, King Harald, thought it but a small matter to take an earl's life and land when he subdued all Norway, and held it under him to old age."

Harald replied, "It is not so easy, mother, to cut off Earl Sigurd as to slay a kid or a calf. Earl Sigurd is of high birth, powerful in relations, popular, and prudent; and I think if the Throndhjem people knew for certain there was enmity between us, they would all take his side, and we could expect only evil from them. I don't think it would be safe for any of us brothers to fall into the hands of the Throndhjem people."



OLAF CONSULTS A SEER OF SCILLY ISLES.

(From a painting by Aeby, Rudolstadt.)

IN a plundering expedition to England Olaf Trygvason was driven out of his course and took refuge in a harbor of the Scilly isles, where a famous seer lived, whom he secretly resolved to consult as to his future destiny. The aged hermit penetrated the King's disguise and told him he would become renowned through valorous deeds, but that in a battle soon to be fought he would be wounded near to death. From this wound, however, he would recover in seven nights, and thereupon be baptized into the Christian faith and spread the gospel throughout his kingdom. Everything transpired as the aged anchorite prophesied, from which incident dates the beginning of Christianity in Norway.

See page 131.

Then said Gunhild, "We shall go to work another way, and not put ourselves forward. Harald and Erling shall come in harvest to North More, and there I shall meet you, and we shall consult together what is to be done." This was done.

4.—GUNHILD'S SONS AND GRJOTGARD.

Earl Sigurd had a brother called Grjotgard, who was much younger, and much less respected; in fact, was held in no title of honour. He had many people, however, about him, and in summer went on viking cruises, and gathered to himself property. Now King Harald sent messengers to Throndhjem with offers of friendship, and with presents. The messengers declared that King Harald was willing to be on the same friendly terms with the earl that King Hakon had been: adding, that they wished the earl to come to King Harald, that their friendship might be put on a firm footing. The Earl Sigurd received well the king's messengers and friendly message, but said that on account of his many affairs he could not come to the king. He sent many friendly gifts, and many glad and grateful words to the king, in return for his friendship. With this reply the messengers set off, and went to Grjotgard, for whom they had the same message, and brought him good presents, and offered him King Harald's friendship, and invited him to visit the king. Grjotgard promised to come; and at the appointed time he paid a visit to King Harald and Gunhild, and was received in the most friendly manner. They treated him on the most intimate footing, so that Grjotgard had

access to their private consultations and secret councils. At last the conversation, by an understanding between the king and queen, was turned upon Earl Sigurd; and they spoke to Grjotgard about the earl having kept him so long in obscurity, and asked him if he would not join the king's brothers in an attack on the earl. If he would join with them, the king promised Grjotgard that he should be his earl, and have the same government that Sigurd had. It came so far that a secret agreement was made between them, that Grjotgard should spy out the most favourable opportunity of attacking by surprise Earl Sigurd, and should give King Harald notice of it. After this agreement Grjotgard returned home with many good presents from the king.

5.—SIGURD BURNT IN A HOUSE IN STJORADAL.

Earl Sigurd went in harvest into Stjoradal to guest-quarters, and from thence went to Oglo to a feast. The earl usually had many people about him, for he did not trust the king; but now, after friendly messages had passed between the king and him, he had no great following of people with him. Then Grjotgard sent word to the king that he could never expect a better opportunity to fall upon Earl Sigurd; and immediately, that very evening, Harald and Erling sailed into Throndhjem fjord with several ships and many people. They sailed all night by starlight, and Grjotgard came out to meet them. Late in the night they came to Oglo, where Earl Sigurd was at the feast, and set fire to the house; and burnt the house, the earl, and all his men. As soon as it was day-

light, they set out through the fjord, and south to More, where they remained a long time.

6.—HISTORY OF HAKON, SIGURD'S SON.

Hakon, the son of Earl Sigurd, was up in the interior of the Throndhjem country when he heard this news. Great was the tumult through all the Throndhjem land, and every vessel that could swim was put into the water; and as soon as the people were gathered together they took Earl Sigurd's son Hakon to be their earl and the leader of the troops, and the whole body steered out of Throndhjem fjord. When Gunhild's sons heard of this, they set off southwards to Raumsdal and South More; and both parties kept eye on each other by their spies. Earl Sigurd was killed two years after the fall of King Hakon (962). So says Eyvind Skaldaspiller in the "Haleygjatal:"—

"At Oglo, as I've heard, Earl Sigurd
Was burnt to death by Norway's lord,—
Sigurd, who once on Hadding's grave
A feast to Odin's ravens gave.
In Oglo's hall, amidst the feast,
When bowls went round and ale flowed fast,
He perished: Harald lit the fire
Which burnt to death the son of Tyr."

Earl Hakon, with the help of his friends, maintained himself in the Throndhjem country for three years; and during that time (963-965) Gunhild's sons got no revenues from it. Hakon had many a battle with Gunhild's sons, and many a man lost his life on both sides. Of this Einar Skalaglam speaks in his lay, called "Vellekla," which he composed about Earl Hakon:—

"The sharp bow-shooter on the sea
Spread wide his fleet, for well loved he
The battle storm; well loved the earl
His battle-banner to unfurl.
O'er the well-trampled battle-field
He raised the red-moon of his shield;
And often dared King Eirik's son
To try the fray with the Earl Hakon."

And he also says:—

"Who is the man who'll dare to say
That Sigurd's son avoids the fray?
He gluts the raven—he ne'er fears
The arrow's song or flight of spears.
With thundering sword he storms in war,
As Odin dreadful; or from far
He makes the arrow-shower fly
To swell the sail of victory.
The victory was dearly bought,
And many a viking-fight was fought
Before the swinger of the sword
Was of the eastern country lord."

And Einar tells also how Earl Hakon avenged his father's murderer:—

"I praise the man, my hero he,
Who in his good ship roves the sea,
Like bird of prey, intent to win
Red vengeance for his slaughtered kin.
From his blue sword the iron rain
That freezes life poured down amain
On him who took his father's life,
On him and his men in the strife.
To Odin many a soul was driven,—
To Odin many a rich gift given.
Loud raged the storm on battle-field—
Axe rang on helm, and sword on shield."

The friends on both sides at last laid themselves between, and brought proposals of peace; for the bondes suffered by this strife and war in the land. At last it was brought to this, by the advice of prudent men, that Earl Hakon should have the same power in the Throndhjem land which his father Earl Sigurd had enjoyed; and the kings, on the other hand, should have the same dominion as King Hakon had: and this agreement was settled with the fullest promises of fidelity to it. Afterwards a great friendship arose between Earl Hakon and Gunhild, although they sometimes attempted to deceive each other. And thus matters stood for three years longer (966-968), in which time Earl Hakon sat quietly in his dominions.

7.—OF HARALD GRAFELD.

King Hakon had generally his seat in Hordaland and Rogaland, and also his brothers; but very often, also, they

…ifferent men, and
…ne said that King
…d in every way.
… and said that he
…as ready to prove
…nflamed that they
…ran to their arms.
…s drunk, and had
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…obody expected that
…rod sailed eastward
…t to sea, saying he
…n he came outside of
… coast, outside of the
…ailed inside, through
…stwards to Folden. He
…gve to meet him, that
… in summer in the Baltic
…llingly, and as a friend,
…ing Gudrod had but few
…t him with a single boat.
…t of Sotanes; but just as
… place, Gudrod's men ran
…nd twelve men. He lies
…e's Cairn (963).

…DROD'S FALL.

…utside of the rocks and isles;
… and came in the night-time to
…Gudrod Bjornson was at a feast

and was a rich and powerful man, and a great friend of the earl. Eirik gave hopes very early that he would become an able man, was handsome in countenance, and stout and strong for a child; but the earl did not pay much attention to him. The earl himself was one of the handsomest men in countenance,—not tall, but very strong, and well practised in all kinds of exercises; and withal prudent, of good understanding, and a deadly man at arms.

9.—KING TRYGVE OLAFSON'S MURDER.

It happened one harvest (962) that Earl Hakon, on a journey in the Uplands, came to Hedemark; and King Trygve Olafson and King Gudrod Bjornson met him there, and Dale-Gudbrand also came to the meeting. They had agreed to meet, and they talked together long by themselves; but so much only was known of their business, that they were to be friends of each other. They parted, and each went home to his own kingdom. Gunhild and her sons came to hear of this meeting, and they suspected it must have been to lay a treasonable plot against the kings; and they often talked of this among themselves. When spring (963) began to set in, King Harald and his brother King Gudrod proclaimed that they were to make a viking cruise, as usual, either in the West sea, or the Baltic. The people accordingly assembled, launched the ships into the sea, and made themselves ready to sail. When they were drinking the farewell ale,—and they drank bravely,—much and many things were talked over at the drink-table, and, among

other things, were comparisons between different men, and at last between the kings themselves. One said that King Harald excelled his brothers by far, and in every way. On this King Gudrod was very angry, and said that he was in no respect behind Harald, and was ready to prove it. Instantly both parties were so inflamed that they challenged each other to battle, and ran to their arms. But some of the guests who were less drunk, and had more understanding, came between them, and quieted them; and each went to his ship, but nobody expected that they would all sail together. Gudrod sailed eastward along the land, and Harald went out to sea, saying he would go to the westward; but when he came outside of the islands he steered east along the coast, outside of the rocks and isles. Gudrod, again, sailed inside, through the usual channel, to Viken, and eastwards to Folden. He then sent a message to King Trygve to meet him, that they might make a cruise together in summer in the Baltic to plunder. Trygve accepted willingly, and as a friend, the invitation; and as he heard King Gudrod had but few people with him, he came to meet him with a single boat. They met at Veggen, to the east of Sotanes; but just as they were come to the meeting place, Gudrod's men ran up and killed King Trygve and twelve men. He lies buried at a place called Trygve's Cairn (963).

10.—KING GUDROD'S FALL.

King Harald sailed far outside of the rocks and isles; but set his course to Viken, and came in the night-time to Tunsberg, and heard that Gudrod Bjornson was at a feast

a little way up the country. Then King Harald set out immediately with his followers, came in the night, and surrounded the house. King Gudrod Bjornson went out with his people; but after a short resistance he fell, and many men with him. Then King Harald joined his brother King Gudrod, and they subdued all Viken.

11.—OF HARALD GRENSKE.

King Gudrod Bjornson had made a good and suitable marriage, and had by his wife a son called Harald, who had been sent to be fostered to Grenland to a lenderman called Hroe the White. Hroe's son, called Hrane Vidforle (the Far-travelled), was Harald's foster-brother, and about the same age. After his father Gudrod's fall, Harald, who was called Grenske, fled to the Uplands, and with him his foster-brother Hrane, and a few people. Harald staid a while there among his relations; but as Eirik's sons sought after every man who interfered with them, and especially those who might oppose them, Harald Grenske's friends and relations advised him to leave the country. Harald therefore went eastward into Svithjod, and sought shipmates, that he might enter into company with those who went out a cruising to gather property. Harald became in this way a remarkably able man. There was a man in Svithjod at that time called Toste, one of the most powerful and clever in the land among those who had no high name or dignity; and he was a great warrior, who had been often in battle, and was therefore called Skoglar-Toste. Harald Grenske came into his company, and cruised with Toste in summer; and wherever Harald came

he was well thought of by every one. In the winter Harald, after passing two years in the Uplands, took up his abode with Toste, and lived five years with him. Toste had a daughter, who was both young and handsome, but she was proud and high-minded. She was called Sigrid, and was afterwards married to the Swedish king, Eirik the Victorious, and had a son by him, called Olaf the Swede, who was afterwards king of Svithjod. King Eirik died in a sick-bed at Upsala ten years after the death of Styrbjorn.

12.—EARL HAKON'S FEUDS.

Gunhild's sons levied a great army in Viken (963), and sailed along the land northwards, collecting people and ships on the way out of every district. They then made known their intent, to proceed northwards with their army against Earl Hakon in Throndhjem. When Earl Hakon heard this news, he also collected men, and fitted out ships; and when he heard what an overwhelming force Gunhild's sons had with them, he steered south with his fleet to More, pillaging wherever he came, and killing many jeople. He then sent the whole of the bonde army back to Throndhjem; but he himself, with his men-at-arms, proceeded by both the districts of More and Raumsdal, and had his spies out to the south of Stad to spy the army of Gunhild's sons; and when he heard they were come into the Fjords, and were waiting for a fair wind to sail northwards round Stad, Earl Hakon set out to sea from the north side of Stad, so far that his sails could not be seen from the land, and then sailed eastward on a line

with the coast, and came to Denmark, from whence he sailed into the Baltic, and pillaged there during the summer. Gunhild's sons conducted their army north to Throndhjem, and remained there the whole summer collecting the scat and duties. But when summer was advanced they left Sigurd Slefa and Gudron behind; and the other brothers returned eastward with the levied army they had taken up in summer.

13.—OF EARL HAKON AND GUNHILD'S SONS.

Earl Hakon, towards harvest (963), sailed into the Bothnian Gulf to Helsingjaland, drew his ships up there on the beach, and took the land-ways through Helsingjaland and Jamtaland, and so eastwards round the dividing ridge (the Kjol, or keel of the country), and down into the Throndhjem district. Many people streamed towards him, and he fitted out ships. When the sons of Gunhild heard of this they got on board their ships, and sailed out of the Fjord; and Earl Hakon came to his seat at Hlader, and remained there all winter. The sons of Gunhild, on the other hand, occupied More; and they and the earl attacked each other in turns, killing each other's people. Earl Hakon kept his dominions of Throndhjem, and was there generally in the winter; but in summer he sometimes went to Helsingjaland, where he went on board of his ships and sailed with them down into the Baltic, and plundered there; and sometimes he remained in Throndhjem, and kept an army on foot, so that Gunhild's sons could get no hold northwards of Stad.

14.—SIGURD SLEFA'S MURDER.

One summer Harald Grayskin with his troops went north to Bjarmaland, where he forayed, and fought a great battle with the inhabitants on the banks of the Vina (Dwina). King Harald gained the victory, killed many people, plundered and wasted and burned far and wide in the land, and made enormous booty. Glum Geirason tells of it thus:—

"I saw the hero Harald chase
With bloody sword Bjarme's race:
They fly before him through the night,
All by their burning city's light.
On Dwina's bank, at Harald's word,
Arose the storm of spear and sword.
In such a wild war-cruise as this,
Great would he be who could bring peace."

King Sigurd Slefa came to the Herse Klyp's house. Klyp was a son of Thord, and a grandson of Hordakare, and was a man of power and great family. He was not at home; but his wife Alof gave a good reception to the king, and made a great feast at which there was much drinking. Alof was a daughter of Asbjorn, and sister to Jarnskegge, north in Yrjar. Asbjorn's brother was called Hreidar, who was father to Styrkar, whose son was Eindride, father of Einar Tambaskielfer. In the night the king went to bed to Alof against her will, and then set out on his journey. The harvest thereafter, King Harald and his brother King Sigurd Slefa went to Vors, and summoned the bondes to a Thing. There the bondes fell on them, and would have killed them, but they escaped and took different roads. King Harald went to Hardanger, but King Sigurd to Alrekstader. Now when the Herse Klyp heard of this, he and his relations assembled to attack the king; and Vemund Volubrjot[1] was

[1]Volubrjótr,—literally the one who breaks the vala, that is, breaks the skulls of witches.

chief of their troop. Now when they came to the house they attacked the king, and Herse Klyp, it is said, ran him through with his sword and killed him; but instantly Klyp was killed on the spot by Erling Gamle (965).

15.—GRJOTGARD'S FALL.

King Harald Grafeld and his brother King Gudrod gathered together a great army in the east country, with which they set out northwards to Throndhjem (968). When Earl Hakon heard of it he collected men, and set out to More, where he plundered. There his father's brother, Grjotgard, had the command and defence of the country on account of Gunhild's sons, and he assembled an army by order of the kings. Earl Hakon advanced to meet him, and gave him battle; and there fell Grjotgard and two other earls, and many a man besides. So says Einar Skalaglam:—

"The helm-crown'd Hakon, brave as stout,
Again has put his foes to rout.
The bowl runs o'er with Odin's mead,[1]
That fires the skald when mighty deed
Has to be sung. Earl Hakon's sword,
In single combat, as I've heard,
Three sons of earls from this one fray
To dwell with Odin drove away."[2]

Thereafter Earl Hakon went out to sea, and sailed outside the coast, and came to Denmark. He went to the Danish King, Harald Gormson, and was well received by him, and staid with him all winter (969). At that time there was also with the Danish king a man called Harald, a son of Knut Gormson, and a brother's son of King Harald. He was lately come home from a long viking cruise, on which he had gathered great riches, and there-

[1]Odin's mead, called Bodn, was the blood or mead the sons of Brage, the god of poets, drank to inspire them.—L.
[2]To dwell with Odin,—viz. slew them.—L.

fore he was called Gold Harald. He thought he had a good chance of coming to the Danish kingdom.

16.—KING ERLING'S FALL.

King Harald Grafeld and his brothers proceeded northwards to Throndhjem, where they met no opposition. They levied the scat-duties, and all other revenues, and laid heavy penalties upon the bondes; for the kings had for a long time received but little income from Throndhjem, because Earl Hakon was there with many troops, and was at variance with these kings. In autumn (968) King Harald went south with the greater part of the men-at-arms, but King Erling remained behind with his men. He raised great contributions from the bondes, and pressed severely on them; at which the bondes murmured greatly, and submitted to their losses with impatience. In winter they gathered together in a great force to go against King Erling, just as he was at a feast; and they gave battle to him, and he with the most of his men fell (969).

17.—THE SEASONS IN NORWAY AT THIS TIME.

While Gunhild's sons reigned in Norway the seasons were always bad, and the longer they reigned the worse were the crops; and the bondes laid the blame on them. They were very greedy, and used the bondes harshly. It came at length to be so bad that fish, as well as corn, were wanting. In Halogaland there was the greatest famine and distress; for scarcely any corn grew, and even snow was lying, and the cattle were bound in the byres[1] all over

[1]Byres = gards or farms.

the country until midsummer. Eyvind Skaldaspiller describes it in his poem, as he came outside of his house and found a thick snow-drift at that season:—

"'Tis midsummer, yet deep snows rest
On Odin's mother's frozen breast:
Like Laplanders, our cattle-kind
In stall or stable we must bind."

18.—THE ICELANDERS AND EYVIND THE SKALD.

Eyvind composed a poem about the people of Iceland, for which they rewarded him by each bonde giving him three silver pennies, of full weight and white in the fracture. And when the silver was brought together at the Althing, the people resolved to have it purified, and made into a row of clasps; and after the workmanship of the silver was paid, the row of clasps was valued at fifty marks. This they sent to Eyvind; but Eyvind was obliged to separate the clasps from each other, and sell them to buy food for his household. But the same spring a shoal of herrings set in upon the fishing ground beyond the coast-side, and Eyvind manned a ship's boat with his house servants and cottars, and rowed to where the herrings were come, and sang:—

"Now let the steed of ocean bound
O'er the North Sea with dashing sound;
Let nimble tern and screaming gull
Fly round and round—our net is full.
Fain would I know if Fortune sends
A like provision to my friends.
Welcome provision 'tis, I wot,
That the whale drives to our cook's pot."

So entirely were his movable goods exhausted, that he was obliged to sell his arrows to buy herrings, or other meat for his table:—

"Our arms and ornaments of gold
To buy us food we gladly sold:
The arrows of the bow gave we
For the bright arrows of the sea."[1]

[1]Herrings, from their swift darting along, are called the arrows of the sea.

KING OLAF TRYGVASON'S SAGA.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

HITHERTO the narrative has been more or less fragmentary. With Olaf Trygvason's Saga reliable history begins, and the narration is full and connected. The story of Hakon the earl is incorporated in this saga.

Accounts of Olaf Trygvason may be found in Od the Monk's legendary saga, in parts of *Agrip*, Historia Norvegiæ, and in Thjodrek. Icelandic works on this epoch are:

Egla, Eyrbyggja, Finboga, Floamanna, Færeyinga, Hallfredar Saga, Havardar Saga, Are's Islendinga-bok, Kristni Saga, Laxdæla, Ljosvetninga, Njala, Orkneyinga, Viga Glums Saga, and Viga Styrs Saga.

The skalds quoted are:—Glum Geirason, Eyvind Finson, Skaldaspiller, Einar Skalaglam, Tind Halkelson, Eyjolf Dadaskald, Hallarstein, Halfred Vandrædaskald, Haldor Ukristne, Skule Thorsteinson, and Thord Kolbeinson.

1.—OLAF TRYGVASON'S BIRTH.

King Trygve Olafson had married a wife who was called Astrid. She was a daughter of Eirik Bjodaskalle, a great man, who dwelt at Oprustader. But after Trygve's death (963) Astrid fled, and privately took with her all the loose property she could. Her foster-father, Thorolf Lusarskeg, followed her, and never left her; and others of her faithful followers spied about to discover her enemies, and where they were. Astrid was pregnant with a child of King Trygve, and she went to a lake, and concealed herself in a holm or small island in it with a few men. Here her child was born, and it was a boy; and

water was poured over it, and it was called Olaf after the grandfather. Astrid remained all summer here in concealment; but when the nights became dark, and the day began to shorten and the weather to be cold, she was obliged to take to the land, along with Thorolf and a few other men. They did not seek for houses unless in the night-time, when they came to them secretly; and they spoke to nobody. One evening, towards dark, they came to Oprustader, where Astrid's father Eirik dwelt, and privately sent a man to Eirik to tell him; and Eirik took them to an out-house, and spread a table for them with the best of food. When Astrid had been here a short time her travelling attendants left her, and none remained behind with her but two servant girls, her child Olaf, Thorolf Lusarskeg, and his son Thorgils, who was six years old; and they remained all winter (964).

2.—OF GUNHILD'S SONS.

After Trygve Olafson's murder, Harald Grafeld and his brother Gudrod went to the farm which he owned; but Astrid was gone, and they could learn no tidings of her. A loose report came to their ears that she was pregnant to King Trygve; but they soon went away northwards, as before related. As soon as they met their mother Gunhild, they told her all that had taken place. She inquired particularly about Astrid, and they told her the report they had heard; but as Gunhild's sons the same harvest and winter after had bickerings with Earl Hakon, as before related, they did not seek after Astrid and her son that winter.

3.—ASTRID'S JOURNEY.

The spring after (964) Gunhild sent spies to the Uplands, and all the way down to Viken, to spy what they could about Astrid; and her men came back, and could only tell her that Astrid must be with her father Eirik, and it was probable was bringing up her infant, the son of Trygve. Then Gunhild, without delay, sent off men well furnished with arms and horses, and in all a troop of thirty; and as their leader she sent a particular friend of her own, a powerful man called Hakon. Her orders were to go to Oprustader, to Eirik, and take King Trygve's son from thence, and bring the child to her; and with these orders the men went out. Now when they were come to the neighbourhood of Oprustader, some of Eirik's friends observed the troop of travellers, and about the close of the day brought him word of their approach. Eirik immediately, in the night, made preparation for Astrid's flight, gave her good guides, and sent her away eastward to Svithjod, to his good friend Hakon Gamle, who was a powerful man there. Long before day they departed, and towards evening they reached a domain called Skaun. Here they saw a large mansion, towards which they went, and begged a night's lodging. For the sake of concealment they were clad in mean clothing. There dwelt here a bonde called Bjorn Eiterkveisa, who was very rich, but very inhospitable. He drove them away; and therefore, towards dark, they went to another domain close by that was called Vidar. Thorstein was the name of the bonde; and he gave them lodging, and

took good care of them, so that they slept well, and were well entertained. Early that morning Gunhild's men had come to Oprustader, and inquired for Astrid and her son. As Eirik told them she was not there, they searched the whole house, and remained till late in the day before they got any news of Astrid. Then they rode after her the way she had taken, and late at night they came to Bjorn Eiterkveisa in Skaun, and took up their quarters there. Hakon asked Bjorn if he knew anything about Astrid, and he said some people had been there in the evening wanting lodgings; "but I drove them away, and I suppose they have gone to some of the neighbouring houses." Thorstein's labourer was coming from the forest, having left his work at nightfall, and called in at Bjorn's house because it was in his way; and finding there were guests come to the house, and learning their business, he comes toThorstein and tells him of it. As about a third part of the night was still remaining, Thorstein wakens his guests and orders them in an angry voice to go about their business; but as soon as they were out of the house upon the road, Thorstein tells them that Gunhild's messengers were at Bjorn's house, and are upon the trace of them. They entreat of him to help them, and he gave them a guide and some provisions. He conducted them through a forest to a lake, in which there was an islet overgrown with reeds. They waded out to the islet, and hid themselves among the reeds. Early in the morning Hakon rode away from Bjorn's into the township, and wherever he came he asked after Astrid; and when he came to Thorstein's he asked if she had been there. He said that

some people had been there; but as soon as it was daylight they had set off again, eastwards, to the forest. Hakon made Thorstein go along with them, as he knew all the roads and hiding-places. Thorstein went with them; but when they were come into the woods, he led them right across the way Astrid had taken. They went about and about the whole day to no purpose, as they could find no trace of her, so they turned back to tell Gunhild the end of their travel. Astrid and her friends proceeded on their journey, and came to Svithjod, to Hakon Gamle (the Old), where she and her son remained a long time, and had friendly welcome.

4.—HAKON'S EMBASSY TO SWEDEN.

When Gunhild, the mother of the kings, heard that Astrid and her son Olaf were in the kingdom of Svithjod, she again sent Hakon, with a good attendance, eastward, to Eirik king of Sweden, with presents and messages of friendship. The ambassadors were well received and well treated. Hakon, after a time, disclosed his errand to the king, saying that Gunhild had sent him with the request that the king would assist him in getting hold of Olaf Trygvason, to conduct him to Norway, where Gunhild would bring him up. The king gave Hakon people with him, and he rode with them to Hakon the Old, where Hakon desired, with many friendly expressions, that Olaf should go with him. Hakon the Old returned a friendly answer, saying that it depended entirely upon Olaf's mother. But Astrid would on no account listen to the proposal; and the messengers had to return as they came,

and to tell King Eirik how the matter stood. The ambassadors then prepared to return home, and asked the king for some assistance to take the boy, whether Hakon the Old would or not. The king gave them again some attendants; and when they came to Hakon the Old, they again asked for the boy, and on his refusal to deliver him they used high words and threatened violence. But one of the slaves, Buste by name, attacked Hakon, and was going to kill him; and they barely escaped from the thralls without a cudgelling, and proceeded home to Norway to tell Gunhild their ill success, and that they had only seen Olaf.

5.—OF SIGURD EIRIKSON.

Astrid had a brother called Sigurd, a son of Eirik Bjodaskalle, who had long been abroad in Gardarike (Russia) with King Valdemar, and was there in great consideration. Astrid had now a great inclination to travel to her brother there. Hakon the Old gave her good attendants, and what was needful for the journey, and she set out with some merchants. She had then been two years (965-966) with Hakon the Old, and Olaf was three years of age. As they sailed out into the Baltic, they were captured by vikings of Eistland, who made booty both of the people and goods, killing some, and dividing others as slaves. Olaf was separated from his mother, and an Eistland man called Klerkon got him as his share along with Thorolf and Thorgils. Klerkon thought that Thorolf was too old for a slave, and that there was not much work to be got out of him, so he killed him; but

took the boys with him, and sold them to a man called Klerk for a stout and good ram. A third man, called Reas, bought Olaf for a good cloak. Reas had a wife called Rekon, and a son by her whose name was Rekone. Olaf was long with them, was treated well, and was much beloved by the people. Olaf was six years in Eistland in this banishment (967-972).

6.—OLAF IS SET FREE IN EISTLAND.

Sigurd, the son of Eirik (Astrid's brother), came into Eistland from Novgorod, on King Valdemar's business to collect the king's taxes and rents. Sigurd came as a man of consequence, with many followers and great magnificence. In the market-place he happened to observe a remarkably handsome boy; and as he could distinguish that he was a foreigner, he asked him his name and family. He answered him, that his name was Olaf; that he was a son of Trygve Olafson; and Astrid, a daughter of Eirik Bjodaskalle, was his mother. Then Sigurd knew that the boy was his sister's son, and asked him how he came there. Olaf told him minutely all his adventures, and Sigurd told him to follow him to the peasant Reas. When he came there he bought both the boys, Olaf and Thorgils, and took them with him to Holmgard. But, for the first, he made nothing known of Olaf's relationship to him, but treated him well.

7.—KLERKON KILLED BY OLAF.

Olaf Trygvason was one day in the market-place, where there was a great number of people. He recognised

Klerkon again, who had killed his foster-father Thorolf Lusarskeg. Olaf had a little axe in his hand, and with it he clove Klerkon's skull down to the brain, and ran home to his lodging, and told his friend Sigurd what he had done. Sigurd immediately took Olaf to Queen Allogia's house, told her what had happened, and begged her to protect the boy. She replied, that the boy appeared far too comely to allow him to be slain; and she ordered her people to be drawn out fully armed. In Holmgard the sacredness of peace is so respected, that it is law there to slay whoever puts a man to death except by judgment of law; and, according to this law and usage, the whole people stormed and sought after the boy. It was reported that he was in the Queen's house, and that there was a number of armed men there. When this was told to the king, he went there with his people, but would allow no bloodshed. It was settled at last in peace, that the king should name the fine for the murder; and the queen paid it. Olaf remained afterwards with the queen, and was much beloved. It is a law at Holmgard, that no man of royal descent shall stay there without the king's permission. Sigurd therefore told the queen of what family Olaf was, and for what reason he had come to Russia; namely, that he could not remain with safety in his own country: and begged her to speak to the king about it. She did so, and begged the king to help a king's son whose fate had been so hard; and in consequence of her entreaty the king promised to assist him, and accordingly he received Olaf into his court, and treated him nobly, and as a king's son. Olaf was nine years old when he came to Russia, and he

remained nine years more (973-981) with King Valdemar. Olaf was the handsomest of men, very stout and strong, and in all bodily exercises he excelled every Northman that ever was heard of.

8.—OF HAKON EARL OF HLADER.

Earl Hakon, Sigurd's son, was with the Danish king, Harald Gormson, the winter after he had fled from Norway before Gunhild's sons. During the winter (969) the earl had so much care and sorrow that he took to bed, and passed many sleepless nights, and ate and drank no more than was needful to support his strength. Then he sent a private message to his friends north in Throndhjem, and proposed to them that they should kill King Erling, if they had an opportunity; adding, that he would come to them in summer. The same winter the Throndhjem people accordingly, as before related, killed King Erling. There was great friendship between Earl Hakon and Gold Harald, and Harald told Hakon all his intentions. He told him that he was tired of a ship-life, and wanted to settle on the land; and asked Hakon if he thought his brother King Harald would agree to divide the kingdom with him if he asked it. "I think," replied Hakon, "that the Danish king would not deny thy right; but the best way to know is to speak to the king himself. I know for certain so much, that you will not get a kingdom if you don't ask for it." Soon after this conversation Gold Harald spoke to the king about the matter, in the presence of many great men who were friends to both; and Gold Harald asked King Harald to divide the kingdom with

him in two equal parts, to which his royal birth and the custom of the Danish monarchy gave him right. The king was highly incensed at this demand, and said that no man had asked his father Gorm to be king over half of Denmark, nor yet his grandfather King Hordaknut, or Sigurd Orm, or Ragnar Lodbrok; and he was so exasperated and angry, that nobody ventured to speak of it to him.

9.—OF GOLD HARALD.

Gold Harald was now worse off than before; for he had got no kingdom, and had got the king's anger by proposing it. He went as usual to his friend Hakon, and complained to him of his fate, and asked for good advice, and if he could help him to get his share of the kingdom; saying that he would rather try force, and the chance of war, than give it up.

Hakon advised him not to speak to any man so that this should be known; "for," said he, "it concerns thy life: and rather consider with thyself what thou art man enough to undertake; for to accomplish such a purpose requires a bold and firm man, who will neither stick at good nor evil to do that which is intended; for to take up great resolutions, and then to lay them aside, would only end in dishonour."

Gold Harald replies,—"I will so carry on what I begin, that I will not hesitate to kill Harald with my own hands, if I can come thereby to the kingdom he denies me, and which is mine by right." And so they separated.

Now King Harald comes also to Earl Hakon, and tells

him the demand on his kingdom which Gold Harald had made, and also his answer, and that he would upon no account consent to diminish his kingdom. "And if Gold Harald persists in his demand, I will have no hesitation in having him killed; for I will not trust him if he does not renounce it."

The earl answered,—"My thoughts are, that Harald has carried his demand so far that he cannot now let it drop, and I expect nothing but war in the land; and that he will be able to gather a great force, because his father was so beloved. And then it would be a great enormity if you were to kill your relation; for, as things now stand, all men would say that he was innocent. But I am far from saying, or advising, that you should make yourself a smaller king than your father Gorm was, who in many ways enlarged, but never diminished his kingdom."

The king replies,—"What then is your advice,—if I am neither to divide my kingdom, nor to get rid of my fright and danger?"

"Let us meet again in a few days," said Earl Hakon, "and I will then have considered the matter well, and will give you my advice upon it."

The king then went away with his people.

10.—COUNCILS HELD BY HAKON AND HARALD.

Earl Hakon had now great reflection, and many opinions to weigh, and he let only very few be in the house with him. In a few days King Harald came again to the earl to speak with him, and ask if he had yet considered fully the matter they had been talking of.

"I have," said the earl, "considered it night and day ever since, and find it most advisable that you retain and rule over the whole of your kingdom just as your father left it; but that you obtain for your relation Harald another kingdom, that he also may enjoy honour and dignity."

"What kind of kingdom is that," said the king, "which I can give to Harald, that I may possess Denmark entire?"

"It is Norway," said the earl. "The kings who are there are oppressive to the people of the country, so that every man is against them who has tax or service to pay."

The king replies,—"Norway is a large country, and the people fierce, and not good to attack with a foreign army. We found that sufficiently when Hakon defended that country; for we lost many people, and gained no victory. Besides, Harald the son of Eirik is my foster-son, and has sat on my knee."

The earl answers,—"I have long known that you have helped Gunhild's sons with your force, and a bad return you have got for it; but we shall get at Norway much more easily than by fighting for it with all the Danish force. Send a message to your foster-son Harald, Eirik's son, and offer him the lands and fiefs which Gunhild's sons held before in Denmark. Appoint him a meeting, and Gold Harald will soon conquer for himself a kingdom in Norway from Harald Grafeld."

The king replies, that it would be called a bad business to deceive his own foster-son.

"The Danes," answered the earl, "will rather say that

it was better to kill a Norwegian viking than a Danish, and your own brother's son."

They spoke so long over the matter, that they agreed on it.

11.—HARALD GORMSON'S MESSAGE TO NORWAY.

Thereafter Gold Harald had a conference with Earl Hakon; and the earl told him he had now advanced his business so far, that there was hope a kingdom might stand open for him in Norway. "We can then continue," said he, "our ancient friendship, and I can be of the greatest use to you in Norway. Take first that kingdom. King Harald is now very old, and has but one son, and cares but little about him, as he is but the son of a concubine."

The Earl talked so long to Gold Harald that the project pleased him well; and the king, the earl, and Gold Harald often talked over the business together. The Danish king then sent messengers north to Norway to Harald Grafeld, and fitted them out magnificently for their journey. They were well received by Harald. The messengers told him that Earl Hakon was in Denmark, but was lying dangerously sick, and almost out of his senses. They then delivered from Harald, the Danish king, the invitation to Harald Grafeld, his foster-son, to come to him, and receive investiture of the fiefs he and his brothers before him had formerly held in Denmark; and appointing a meeting in Jutland. Harald Grafeld laid the matter before his mother and other friends. Their opinions were divided. Some thought that the expedition

was not without its danger, on account of the men with whom they had to deal; but the most were in haste to begin the journey, for at that time there was such a famine in Norway that the kings could scarcely feed their men-at-arms; and on this account the Fjord, on which the kings resided, usually got the name of Hardanger (Hard-acre). In Denmark, on the other hand, there had been tolerably good crops; so that people thought that if King Harald got fiefs, and something to rule over there, they would get some assistance. It was therefore concluded, before the messengers returned, that Harald should travel to Denmark to the Danish king in summer, and accept the conditions King Harald offered.

12.—TREACHERY OF HARALD AND HAKON.

Harald Grafeld went to Denmark in the summer (969) with three long-ships; and Herse Arinbjorn, from the Fjord district, commanded one of them. King Harald sailed from Viken over to Limfjord in Jutland, and landed at the narrow neck of land where the Danish king was expected. Now when Gold Harald heard of this, he sailed there with nine ships which he had fitted out before for a viking cruise. Earl Hakon had also his war force on foot; namely, twelve large ships, all ready, with which he proposed to make an expedition. When Gold Harald had departed Earl Hakon says to the king, "Now I don't know if we are not sailing on an expedition, and yet are to pay the penalty of not having joined it. Gold Harald may kill Harald Grafeld, and get the kingdom of Norway; but you must not think he will be true to you,

although you do help him to so much power, for he told me in winter that he would take your life if he could find opportunity to do so. Now I will win Norway for you, and kill Gold Harald, if you will promise me a good condition under you. I will be your earl; swear an oath of fidelity to you, and, with your help, conquer all Norway for you; hold the country under your rule; pay you the scat and taxes; and you will be a greater king than your father, as you will have two kingdoms under you." The king and the earl agreed upon this, and Hakon set off to seek Gold Harald.

13.—DEATH OF HARALD GRAFELD.

Gold Harald came to the neck of land at Limfjord, and immediately challenged Harald Grafeld to battle; and although Harald had fewer men, he went immediately on the land, prepared for battle, and drew up his troops. Before the lines came together Harald Grafeld urged on his men ,and told them to draw their swords. He himself advanced the foremost of the troop, hewing down on each side. So says Glum Geirason, in Grafeld's lay:—

"Brave were thy words in battle-field,
Thou stainer of the snow-white shield!—
Thou gallant war-god! With thy voice
Thou couldst the dying man rejoice:
The cheer of Harald could impart
Courage and life to every heart.
While swinging high the blood-smeared sword,
By arm and voice we knew our lord."

There fell Harald Grafeld. So says Glum Geirason:—

"On Limfjord's strand, by the tide's flow,
Stern Fate has laid King Harald low;
The gallant viking-cruiser—he
Who loved the isle-encircling sea.
The generous ruler of the land
Fell at the narrow Limfjord strand,
Enticed by Hakon's cunning speech
To his death-bed on Limfjord's beach."

The most of King Harald's men fell with him. There also fell Herse Arinbjorn.

This happened fifteen years after the death of Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, and thirteen years after that of Sigurd earl of Hlader. The priest Are Frode says that Earl Hakon was thirteen years earl over his father's dominions in Throndhjem district before the fall of Harald Grafeld; but, for the last six years of Harald Grafeld's life, Are Frode says the Earl Hakon and Gunhild's sons fought against each other, and drove each other out of the land by turns.

14.—GOLD HARALD'S DEATH.

Soon after Harald Grafeld's fall, Earl Hakon came up to Gold Harald, and the earl immediately gave battle to Harald. Hakon gained the victory, and Harald was made prisoner; but Hakon had him immediately hanged on a gallows. Hakon then went to the Danish king, and no doubt easily settled with him for the killing his relative Gold Harald.

15.—DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY.

Soon after King Harald Gormson ordered a levy of men over all his kingdom, and sailed with 600 ships.[1] There were with him Earl Hakon, Harald Grenske, a son of King Gudrod, and many other great men who had fled from their udal estates in Norway on account of Gunhild's sons. The Danish king sailed with his fleet from the south to Viken, where all the people of the country surrendered to him. When he came to Tunsberg swarms of people joined him; and King Harald gave to Earl Hakon

[1] *I.e.*, 720 ships, as they were counted by long hundreds, 100 = 120.

the command of all the men who came to him in Norway, and gave him the government over Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn, Fjord-district, South More, Raumsdal, and North More. These seven districts gave King Harald to Earl Hakon to rule over, with the same rights as Harald Harfager gave with them to his sons; only with the difference, that Hakon should there, as well as in Throndhjem, have the king's land-estates and land-tax, and use the king's money and goods according to his necessities whenever there was war in the country. King Harald also gave Harald Grenske Vingulmark, Vestfold, and Agder all the way to Lidandisnes (the Naze), together with the title of king; and let him have these dominions with the same rights as his family in former times had held them, and as Harald Harfager had given with them to his sons. Harald Grenske was then eighteen years old, and he became afterwards a celebrated man. Harald king of Denmark returned home thereafter with all his army.

16.—GUNHILD'S SONS LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

Earl Hakon proceeded northwards along the coast with his force; and when Gunhild and her sons got the tidings they proceeded to gather troops, but were ill off for men. Then they took the same resolution as before, to sail out to sea with such men as would follow them away to the westward (969). They came first to the Orkney Islands, and remained there a while. There were in Orkney then the Earls Hlodver, Arnfid, Ljot, and Skule, the sons of Thorfin Hausakljufer.

Earl Hakon now brought all the country under him, and

remained all winter (670) in Throndhjem. Einar Skalaglam speaks of his conquests in Vellekla:—

"Norway's great watchman, Harald, now
May bind the silk snood on his brow—
Seven provinces he seized. The realm
Prospers with Hakon at the helm."

As Hakon the earl proceeded this summer along the coast subjecting all the people to him, he ordered that over all his dominions the temples and sacrifices should be restored, and continued as of old. So it is said in the Vellekla:—

"Hakon the earl, so good and wise,
Let all the ancient temples rise;—
Thor's temples raised with fostering hand,
That had been ruined through the land.
His valiant champions, who were slain
On battle-fields across the main,
To Thor, the thunder-god, may tell
How for the gods all turns out well.
The hardy warrior now once more
Offers the sacrifice of gore;
The shield-bearer in Loke's game
Invokes once more great Odin's name,
The green earth gladly yields her store,
As she was wont in days of yore,
Since the brave breaker of the spears
The holy shrines again uprears.
The earl has conquered with strong hand
All that lies north of Viken land:
In battle storm, and iron rain,
Hakon spreads wide his sword's domain."

The first winter that Hakon ruled over Norway the herrings set in everywhere through the fjords to the land, and the seasons ripened to a good crop all that had been sown. The people, therefore, laid in seed for the next year, and got their lands sowed, and had hope of good times.

17.—HAKON'S BATTLE WITH RAGNFRED.

King Ragnfred and King Gudrod, both sons of Gunhild and Eirik, were now the only sons of Gunhild remaining in life. So says Glum Geirason in Grafeld's lay:—

"When in the battle's bloody strife
The sword took noble Harald's life,
Half of my fortunes with him fell:
But his two brothers, I know well,
My loss would soon repair, should they
Again in Norway bear the sway,
And to their promises should stand,
If they return to rule the land."

Ragnfred began his course in the spring after he had

been a year in the Orkney Islands. He sailed from thence to Norway, and had with him fine troops, and large ships. When he came to Norway he learnt that Earl Hakon was in Throndhjem; therefore he steered northwards around Stad, and plundered in South More. Some people submitted to him; for it often happens, when parties of armed men scour over a country, that those who are nearest the danger seek help where they think it may be expected. As soon as Earl Hakon heard the news of disturbance in More, he fitted out ships, sent the war-token through the land, made ready in all haste, and proceeded out of the fjord. He had no difficulty in assembling men. Ragnfred and Earl Hakon met at the north corner of More; and Hakon, who had most men, but fewer ships, began the battle. The combat was severe, but heaviest on Hakon's side; and, as the custom then was, they fought bow to bow, and there was a current in the sound which drove all the ships in upon the land. The earl ordered to row with the oars to the land where landing seemed easiest. When the ships were all grounded, the earl with all his men left them, and drew them up so far that the enemy might not launch them down again, and then drew up his men on a grass-field, and challenged Ragnfred to land. Ragnfred and his men laid their vessels in along the land, and they shot at each other a long time; but upon the land Ragnfred would not venture: and so they separated. Ragnfred sailed with his fleet southwards around Stad; for he was much afraid the whole forces of the country would swarm around Hakon. Hakon, on his part, was not inclined to try again a battle, for he

thought the difference between their ships in size was too great; so in harvest he went north to Throndhjem, and staid there all winter (971). King Ragnfred consequently had all the country south of Stad at his mercy; namely, Fjord district, Hordaland, Sogn, Rogaland; and he had many people about him all winter. When spring approached he ordered out the people and collected a large force. By going about the districts he got many men, ships, and warlike stores sent as he required.

18.—BATTLE BETWEEN HAKON AND RAGNFRED.

Towards spring Earl Hakon ordered out all the men north in the country; and got many people from Halogaland and Naumudal; so that from Bryda to Stad he had men from all the sea-coast. People flocked to him from all the Throndhjem district and from Raumsdal. It was said for certain that he had men from four great districts, and that seven earls followed him, and a matchless number of men. So it is said in the Vellekla:—

"Hakon, defender of the land,
Armed in the North his warrior-band;
To Sogn's old shore his force he led,
And from all quarters thither sped
War-ships and men; and haste was made
By the young god of the sword-blade,
The hero-viking of the wave,
His wide domain from foes to save.
With shining keels seven kings sailed on
To meet this raven-feeding one.
When the clash came, the stunning sound
Was heard in Norway's farthest bound;
And sea-borne corpses, floating far,
Brought round the Naze news from the war."

Earl Hakon sailed then with his fleet southwards around Stad; and when he heard that King Ragnfred with his army had gone towards Sogn, he turned there also with his men to meet him: and there Ragnfred and Hakon met. Hakon came to the land with his ships, marked out a battle-field with hazel branches for King

Ragnfred, and took ground for his own men in it. So it is told in the Vellekla:—

"In the fierce batle Ragnfred then
Met the grim foe of Vindland men;
And many a hero of great name
Fell in the sharp sword's bloody game.
The wielder of fell Narve's weapon,
The conquering hero, valiant Hakon,
Had laid his war-ships on the strand,
And ranged his warriors on the land."

There was a great battle; but Earl Hakon, having by far the most people, gained the victory. It took place on the Thinganes, where Sogn and Hordaland meet.

King Rangfred fled to his ships, after 300 of his men had fallen. So it is said in the Vellekla: —

"Sharp was the battle-strife, I ween,—
Deadly and close it must have been,
Before, upon the bloody plain,
Three hundred corpses of the slain
Were stretched for the black raven's prey;
And when the conquerors took their way
To the sea-shore, they had to tread
O'er piled-up heaps of foemen dead."

After this battle King Ragnfred fled from Norway; but Earl Hakon restored peace to the country, and allowed the great army which had followed him in summer to return home to the north country, and he himself remained in the south that harvest and winter (972).

19.—EARL HAKON'S MARRIAGE.

Earl Hakon married a girl called Thora, a daughter of the powerful Skage Skoptason, and very beautiful she was. They had two sons, Svein and Heming, and a daughter called Bergljot who was afterwards married to Einar Tambaskielfer. Earl Hakon was much addicted to women, and had many children; among others a daughter Ragnhild, whom he married to Skopte Skagason, a brother of Thora. The Earl loved Thora so much that he held Thora's family in higher respect than any other people,

and Skopte his brother-in-law in particular; and he gave him many great fiefs in More. Whenever they were on a cruise together, Skopte must lay his ship nearest to the earl's, and no other ship was allowed to come in between.

20.—DEATH OF SKOPTE.

One summer that Earl Hakon was on a cruise, there was a ship with him of which Thorleif Spake (the Wise) was steersman. In it was also Eirik, Earl Hakon's son, then about ten or eleven years old. Now in the evenings, as they came into harbour, Eirik would not allow any ship but his to lie nearest to the earl's. But when they came to the south, to More, they met Skopte the earl's brother-in-law, with a well-manned ship; and as they rowed towards the fleet, Skopte called out that Thorleif should move out of the harbour to make room for him, and should go to the roadsted. Eirik in haste took up the matter, and ordered Skopte to go himself to the roadstead. When Earl Hakon heard that his son thought himself too great to give place to Skopte, he called to them immediately that they should haul out from their berth, threatening them with chastisement if they did not. When Thorleif heard this, he ordered his men to slip their landcable, and they did so; and Skopte laid his vessel next to the earl's as he used to do. When they came together, Skopte brought the earl all the news he had gathered, and the earl communicated to Skopte all the news he had heard; and Skopte was therefore called Tidindaskopte (the Newsman Skopte). The winter after (973) Eirik was with his foster-father Thorleif, and early in spring he

gathered a crew of followers, and Thorleif gave him a boat of fifteen benches of rowers, with ship furniture, tents, and ship provisions; and Eirik set out from the fjord, and southwards to More. Tidindaskopte happened also to be going with a fully manned boat of fifteen rowers' benches from one of his farms to another, and Eirik went against him to have a battle. Skopte was slain, but Eirik granted life to those of his men who were still on their legs. So says Eyjolf Dadaskald in the Banda lay:—

"At eve the youth went out
To meet the warrior stout—
To meet stout Skopte—he
Whose war-ship roves the sea.
Like force was on each side,
But in the whirling tide
The young wolf Eirik slew
Skopte, and all his crew
And he was a gallant one,
Dear to the Earl Hakon.
Up, youth of steel-hard breast—
No time hast thou to rest!
Thy ocean wings spread wide—
Speed o'er the foaming tide!
Speed on—speed on thy way!
For here thou canst not stay."

Eirik sailed along the land and came to Denmark, and went to King Harald Gormson, and staid with him all winter (974). In spring the Danish king sent him north to Norway, and gave him an earldom, and the government of Vingulmark and Raumarike, on the same terms as the small scat-paying kings had formerly held these domains. So says Eyjolf Dadaskald:—

"South through ocean's spray
His dragon flew away
To Gormson's hall renowned,
Where the bowl goes bravely round.
And the Danish king did place
This youth of noble race
Where, shield and sword in hand,
He would aye defend his land."

Eirik became afterwards a great chief.

21.—OLAF TRYGVASON'S JOURNEY FROM RUSSIA.

All this time Olaf Trygvason was in Gardarike (Russia), and highly esteemed by King Valdemar, and beloved by the queen. King Valdemar made him chief

over the men-at-arms whom he sent out to defend the land. So says Hallarstein:—

"The hater of the niggard hand,
The chief who loves the Northman's land,
Was only twelve years old when he
His Russian war-ships put to sea.

The wain that ploughs the sea was then
Loaded with war-gear by his men—
With swords, and spears, and helms; and deep
Out to the sea his good ships sweep."

Olaf had several battles, and was lucky as a leader of troops. He himself kept a great many men-at-arms at his own expense out of the pay the king gave him. Olaf was very generous to his men, and therefore very popular. But then it came to pass, what so often happens when a foreigner is raised to higher power and dignity than men of the country, that many envied him because he was so favoured by the king, and also not less so by the queen. They hinted to the king that he should take care not to make Olaf too powerful,—"for such a man may be dangerous to you, if he were to allow himself to be used for the purpose of doing you or your kingdom harm; for he is extremely expert in all exercises and feats, and very popular. We do not, indeed, know what it is he can have to talk of so often with the queen." It was then the custom among great monarchs that the queen should have half of the court attendants, and she supported them at her own expense out of the scat and revenue provided for her for that purpose. It was so also at the court of King Valdemar that the queen had an attendance as large as the king, and they vied with each other about the finest men, each wanting to have such in their own service. It so fell out that the king listened to such speeches, and became somewhat silent and blunt towards Olaf. When Olaf

observed this, he told it to the queen; and also that he had a great desire to travel to the Northern land, where his family formerly had power and kingdoms, and where it was most likely he would advance himself. The queen wished him a prosperous journey ,and said he would be found a brave man wherever he might be. Olaf then made ready, went on board, and set out to sea in the Baltic.

As he was coming from the east he made the island of Borgundarholm (Bornholm), where he landed and plundered. The country people hastened down to the strand, and gave him battle; but Olaf gained the victory, and a large booty.

22.—OLAF TRYGVASON'S MARRIAGE.

While Olaf lay at Borgundarholm there came on bad weather, storm, and a heavy sea, so that his ships could not lie there; and he sailed southwards under Vindland, where they found a good harbour. They conducted themselves very peacefully, and remained some time. In Vindland there was then a king called Burizleif, who had three daughters,—Geira, Gunhild, and Astrid. The king's daughter Geira had the power and government in that part where Olaf and his people landed, and Dixen was the name of the man who most usually advised Queen Geira. Now when they heard that unknown people were come to the country, who were of distinguished appearance, and conducted themselves peaceably, Dixen repaired to them with a message from Queen Geira, inviting the strangers to take up their winter abode with her; for the summer

was almost spent, and the weather was severe and stormy. Now when Dixen came to the place he soon saw that the leader was a distinguished man, both from family and personal appearance, and he told Olaf the queen's invitation with the most kindly message. Olaf willingly accepted the invitation, and went in harvest (982) to Queen Geira. They liked each other exceedingly, and Olaf courted Queen Geira; and it was so settled that Olaf married her the same winter, and was ruler, along with Queen Geira, over her dominions. Halfred Vandredaskald tells of these matters in the lay he composed about King Olaf:—

"Why should the deeds the hero did
In Bornholm and the East he hid?
His deadly weapon Olaf bold
Dyed red: why should not this be told?"

23.—EARL HAKON PAYS NO SCAT.

Earl Hakon ruled over Norway, and paid no scat; because the Danish king gave him all the scat revenue that belonged to the king in Norway, for the expense and trouble he had in defending the country against Gunhild's sons.

24.—HARALD OPPOSES CHRISTIANITY.

The Emperor Otta (Otto) was at that time in the Saxon country, and sent a message to King Harald, the Danish king, that he must take on the true faith and be baptized, he and all his people whom he ruled; "otherwise," says the emperor, "we will march against him with an army." The Danish king ordered the land defence to

be fitted out, Danavirke[1] (the Danish wall) to be well fortified, and his ships of war rigged out. He sent a message also to Earl Hakon in Norway to come to him early in spring, and with as many men as he could possibly raise. In spring (975) Earl Hakon levied an army over the whole country which was very numerous, and with it he sailed to meet the Danish king. The king received him in the most honourable manner. Many other chiefs also joined the Danish king with their men, so that he had gathered a very large army.

25.—OLAF TRYGVASON'S WAR EXPEDITION.

Olaf Trygvason had been all winter (982) in Vindland, as before related, and went the same winter to the baronies in Vindland which had formerly been under Queen Geira, but had withdrawn themselves from obedience and payment of taxes. There Olaf made war, killed many people, burnt out others, took much property, and laid all of them under subjection to him, and then went back to his castle. Early in spring Olaf rigged out his ships and set off to sea. He sailed to Skane and made a landing. The people of the country assembled, and gave him battle; but King Olaf conquered, and made a great booty. He then sailed eastward to the island of Gotland, where he captured a merchant vessel belonging to the people of Jamtaland. They made a brave defence; but the end of it was that Olaf cleared the deck, killed many of the men, and took all the goods. He had a third

[1]Danavirke. The Danish work was a wall of earth, stones, and wood, with a deep ditch in front, and a castle at every hundred fathoms, between the rivers Eider and Slien, constructed by Harald Blatand (Bluetooth) to oppose the progress of Charlemagne. Some traces of it still exist.—L.

battle in Gotland, in which he also gained the victory, and made a great booty. So says Halfred Vandredaskald:—

"The king, so fierce in battle-fray,
First made the Vindland men give way:
The Gotlanders must tremble next;
And Scania's shores are sorely vexed
By the sharp pelting arrow shower
The hero and his warriors pour;
And then the Jamtaland men must fly,
Scared by his well-known battle-cry."

26.—OTTA AND HAKON IN BATTLE.

The Emperor Otta assembled a great army from Saxland, Frakland, Frisland, and Vindland. King Burizleif followed him with a large army, and in it was his son-in-law, Olaf Trygvason. The emperor had a great body of horsemen, and still greater of foot people, and a great army from Holstein. Harald, the Danish king, sent Earl Hakon with the army of Northmen that followed him southwards to Danavirke, to defend his kingdom on that side. So it is told in the "Vellekla:"—

"Over the foaming salt sea spray
The Norse sea-horses took their way,
Racing across the ocean-plain
Southwards to Denmark's green domain.
The gallant chief of Hordaland
Sat at the helm with steady hand,
In casque and shield, his men to bring
From Dovre to his friend the king.
He steered his war-ships o'er the wave
To help the Danish king to save
Mordalf, who, with a gallant band
Was hastening from the Jutes' wild land,
Across the forest frontier rude,
With toil and pain through the thick wood.
Glad was the Danish king, I trow,
When he saw Hakon's galley's prow.
The monarch straightway gave command
To Hakon, with a steel-clad band,
To man the Dane-work's rampart stout,
And keep the foreign foemen out."

The Emperor Otta came with his army from the south to Danavirke, but Earl Hakon defended the rampart with his men. The Dane-work (Danavirke) was constructed in this way:—Two fjords run into the land, one on each side; and in the farthest bight of these fjords the Danes had made a great wall of stone, turf, and timber, and dug a deep and broad ditch in front of it, and had also built a

castle over each gate of it. There was a hard battle there, of which the "Vellekla" speaks:—

"Thick the storm of arrows flew,
Loud was the din, black was the view
Of close array of shield and spear
Of Vind, and Frank, and Saxon there.
But little recked our gallant men;
And loud the cry might be heard then
Of Norway's brave sea-roving son—
'On 'gainst the foe! on! lead us on!'"

Earl Hakon drew up his people in ranks upon all the gate-towers of the wall, but the greater part of them he kept marching along the wall to make a defence whereso-ever an attack was threatened. Many of the emperor's people fell without making any impression on the fortifi-cation, so the emperor turned back without farther attempt at an assault on it. So it is said in the "Vellekla":—

"They who the eagle's feast provide
In ranked line fought side by side,
'Gainst lines of war-men under shields
Close packed together on the fields.
Earl Hakon drives by daring deeds
These Saxons to their ocean-steeds;
And the young hero saves from fall
The Danavirke—the people's wall."

After this battle Earl Hakon went back to his ships, and intended to sail home to Norway; but he did not get a favourable wind, and lay for some time outside at Lima-fjord.

27.—HARALD AND HAKON ARE BAPTIZED.

The Emperor Otta turned back with his troops to Slesvik, collected his ships of war, and crossed the fjord of Sle into Jutland. As soon as the Danish king heard of this he marched his army against him, and there was a battle, in which the emperor at last got the victory. The Danish king fled to Limafjord and took refuge in the island Marsey. By the help of mediators who went between the king and the emperor, a truce and a meeting

between them were agreed on. The Emperor Otta and the Danish king met upon Marsey. There Bishop Poppo instructed King Harald in the holy faith; he bore red hot irons in his hands, and exhibited his unscorched hands to the king. Thereafter King Harald allowed himself to be baptized, and also the whole Danish army. King Harald, while he was in Marsey, had sent a message to Hakon that he should come to his succour; and the earl had just reached the island when the king had received baptism. The king sends word to the earl to come to him, and when they met the king forced the earl to allow himself also to be baptized. So Earl Hakon and all the men who were with him were baptized; and the king gave them priests and other learned men with them, and ordered that the earl should make all the people in Norway be baptized. On that they separated; and the earl went out to sea, there to wait for a wind.

28.—HAKON RENOUNCES CHRISTIANITY.

When a wind came with which he thought he could get clear out to sea, he put all the learned men on shore again, and set off to the ocean; but as the wind came round to the south-west, and at last to west, he sailed eastward, out through Eyrarsund, ravaging the land on both sides. He then sailed eastward along Skane, plundering the country wherever he came. When he got east to the skerries of East Gautland, he ran in and landed, and made a great blood-sacrifice. There came two ravens flying which croaked loudly; and now, thought the earl, the blood-offering has been accepted by Odin, and he thought

good luck would be with him any day he liked to go to battle. Then he set fire to his ships, landed his men, and went over all the country with armed hand. Earl Ottar, who ruled over Gautland, came against him, and they held a great battle with each other; but Earl Hakon gained the day, and Earl Ottar and a great part of his men were killed. Earl Hakon now drove with fire and sword over both the Gautlands, until he came into Norway; and then he proceeded by land all the way north to Throndhjem. The "Vellekla" tells about this:—

"On the silent battle-field,
In viking garb, with axe and shield,
The warrior, striding o'er the slain,
Asks of the gods 'What days will gain?'
Two ravens, flying from the east,
Come croaking to the bloody feast:
The warrior knows what they foreshow—
The days when Gautland blood will flow.
A viking-feast Earl Hakon kept,
The land with viking fury swept,
Harrying the land far from the shore
Where foray ne'er was known before.
Leaving the barren cold coast side,
He raged through Gautland far and wide,—
Led many a gold-decked viking shield
O'er many a peaceful inland field.
Bodies on bodies Odin found
Heaped high upon each battle ground:
The moor, as if by witchcraft's power,
Grows green, enriched by bloody shower.
No wonder that the gods delight
To give such luck in every fight
To Hakon's men—for he restores
Their temples on our Norway shores."

29.—THE EMPEROR OTTA RETURNS HOME.

The Emperor Otta went back to his kingdom in the Saxon land, and parted in friendship with the Danish king. It is said that the Emperor Otta stood godfather to Svein, King Harald's son, and gave him his name; so that he was baptized Otta Svein. King Harald held fast by his Christianity to his dying day.

King Burizleif went to Vindland, and his son-in-law King Olaf went with him. This battle is related also by Halfred Vandredaskald in his song on Olaf:—

"He who through the foaming surges
His white-winged ocean-coursers urges,
Hewed from the Danes, in armour dressed,
The iron bark off mail-clad breast."

30.—OLAF'S JOURNEY FROM VINDLAND.

Olaf Trygvason was three years in Vindland (982-984) when Geira his queen fell sick, and she died of her illness. Olaf felt his loss so great that he had no pleasure in Vindland after it. He provided himself, therefore, with warships, and went out again a plundering, and plundered first in Frisland, next in Saxland, and then all the way to Flæmingjaland (Flanders). So says Halfred Vandredaskald:—

"Olaf's broad axe of shining steel
For the shy wolf left many a meal.
The ill-shaped Saxon corpses lay
Heaped up, the witch-wife's horses'[1] prey.
She rides by night: at pools of blood,
Where Frisland men in daylight stood,
Her horses slake their thirst, and fly
On to the field where Flemings lie.
The raven-friend in Odin's dress—
Olaf, who foes can well repress,
Left Flemish flesh for many a meal
With his broad axe of shining steel."

31.—KING OLAF'S FORAYS.

Thereafter Olaf Trygvason sailed to England, and ravaged wide around in the land. He sailed all the way north to Northumberland, where he plundered; and thence to Scotland, where he marauded far and wide. Then he went to the Hebrides, where he fought some battles; and then southwards to Man, where he also fought. He ravaged far around in Ireland, and thence steered to Bretland, which he laid waste with fire and sword, and all the district called Cumberland. He sailed westward from thence to Valland, and marauded there. When he left the west, intending to sail to England, he came to the islands called the Scilly Isles, lying westward from England in the ocean. Thus tells Halfred Vandredaskald of these events:—

[1]Ravens were the witches' horses.—L.

"The brave young king, who ne'er retreats,
The Englishman in England beats.
Death through Northumberland is spread
From battleaxe and broad spear-head.
Through Scotland with his spears he rides;
To Man his glancing ships he guides:
Feeding the wolves where'er he came,
The young king drove a bloody game.
The gallant bowmen in the isles
Slew foemen, who lay heaped in piles.
The Irish fled at Olaf's name—
Fled from a young king seeking fame.
In Bretland, and in Cumberland,
People against him could not stand:
Thick on the fields their corpses lay,
To ravens and howling wolves a prey."

Olaf Trygvason had been four years on this cruise (985-988), from the time he left Vindland till he came to the Scilly Islands.

32.—KING OLAF IS BAPTIZED.

While Olaf Trygvason lay in the Scilly Isles he heard of a seer, or fortune-teller, on the islands, who could tell beforehand things not yet done, and what he foretold many believed was really fulfilled. Olaf became curious to try this man's gift of prophecy. He therefore sent one of his men, who was the handsomest and strongest, clothed him magnificently, and bade him say he was the king; for Olaf was known in all countries as handsomer, stronger, and braver than all others, although, after he had left Russia, he retained no more of his name than that he was called Ole, and was Russian. Now when the messenger came to the fortune-teller, and gave himself out for the king, he got the answer, "Thou art not the king, but I advise thee to be faithful to thy king." And more he would not say to that man. The man returned, and told Olaf, and his desire to meet the fortune-teller was increased; and now he had no doubt of his being really a fortune-teller. Olaf repaired himself to him, and, entering into conversation, asked him if he

could foresee how it would go with him with regard to his kingdom, or of any other fortune he was to have. The hermit replies in a holy spirit of prophecy, "Thou wilt become a renowned king, and do celebrated deeds. Many men wilt thou bring to faith and baptism, and both to thy own and others' good; and that thou mayst have no doubt of the truth of this answer, listen to these tokens: When thou comest to thy ships many of thy people will conspire against thee, and then a battle will follow in which many of thy men will fall, and thou wilt be wounded almost to death, and carried upon a shield to thy ship; yet after seven days thou shalt be well of thy wounds, and immediately thou shalt let thyself be baptized." Soon after Olaf went down to his ships, where he met some mutineers and people who would destroy him and his men. A fight took place, and the result was what the hermit had predicted, that Olaf was wounded, and carried upon a shield to his ship, and that his wound was healed in seven days. Then Olaf perceived that the man had spoken truth,—that he was a true fortune-teller, and had the gift of prophecy. Olaf went once more to the hermit, and asked particularly how he came to have such wisdom in foreseeing things to be. The hermit replied, that the Christian God himself let him know all that he desired; and he brought before Olaf many great proofs of the power of the Almighty. In consequence of this encouragement Olaf agreed to let himself be baptized, and he and all his followers were baptized forthwith. He remained here a long time, took the true faith, and got with him priests and other learned men.

33.—OLAF MARRIES GYDA.

In autumn (988) Olaf sailed from Scilly to England, where he put into a harbour, but proceeded in a friendly way; for England was Christian, and he himself had become Christian. At this time a summons to a Thing went through the country, that all men should come to hold a Thing. Now when the Thing was assembled a queen called Gyda came to it, a sister of Olaf Kvaran, who was king of Dublin in Ireland. She had been married to a great earl in England, and after his death she was at the head of his dominions. In her territory there was a man called Alfvine, who was a great champion and single-combat man. He had paid his addresses to her; but she gave for answer, that she herself would choose whom of the men in her dominions she would take in marriage; and on that account the Thing was assembled, that she might choose a husband. Alfvine came there dressed out in his best clothes, and there were many well-dressed men at the meeting. Olaf had come there also; but had on his bad-weather clothes, and a coarse over-garment, and stood with his people apart from the rest of the crowd. Gyda went round and looked at each, to see if any appeared to her a suitable man. Now when she came to where Olaf stood she looked at him straight in the face, and asked "what sort of man he was?"

He said, "I am called Ole; and I am a stranger here."

Gyda replies, "Wilt thou have me if I choose thee?"

"I will not say no to that," answered he; and he asked what her name was, and her family, and descent.

"I am called Gyda," said she; "and am daughter of the

king of Ireland, and was married in this country to an earl who ruled over this territory. Since his death I have ruled over it, and many have courted me, but none to whom I would choose to be married."

She was a young and handsome woman. They afterwards talked over the matter together, and agreed, and Olaf and Gyda were betrothed.

34.—KING OLAF AND ALFVINE'S DUEL.

Alfvine was very ill pleased with this. It was the custom then in England, if two strove for anything, to settle the matter by single combat;[1] and now Alfvine challenges Olaf Trygvason to fight about this business. The time and place for the combat were settled, and that each should have twelve men with him. When they met, Olaf told his men to do exactly as they saw him do. He had a large axe; and when Alfvine was going to cut at him with his sword he hewed away the sword out of his hand, and with the next blow struck down Alfvine himself. He then bound him fast. It went in the same way with all Alfvine's men. They were beaten down, bound, and carried to Olaf's lodging. Thereupon he ordered Alfvine to quit the country, and never appear in it again; and Olaf took all his property. Olaf in this way got Gyda in marriage, and lived sometimes in England, and sometimes in Ireland.

35.—KING OLAF GETS HIS DOG VIGE.

While Olaf was in Ireland he was once on an expedi-

[1]Holm-gang; so called because the combatants went to a holm or uninhabited isle to fight in Norway.—L.

tion which went by sea. As they required to make a foray for provisions on the coast, some of his men landed, and drove down a large herd of cattle to the strand. Now a peasant came up, and entreated Olaf to give him back the cows that belonged to him. Olaf told him to take his cows, if he could distinguish them; "but don't delay our march." The peasant had with him a large house-dog, which he put in among the herd of cattle, in which many hundred head of beasts were driven together. The dog ran into the herd, and drove out exactly the number which the peasant had said he wanted; and all were marked with the same mark, which showed that the dog knew the right beasts, and was very sagacious. Olaf then asked the peasant if he would sell him the dog. "I would rather give him to you," said the peasant. Olaf immediately presented him with a gold ring in return, and promised him his friendship in future. This dog was called Vige, and was the very best of dogs, and Olaf owned him long afterwards.

36.—HARALD GORMSON SAILS AGAINST ICELAND.

The Danish king, Harald Gormson, heard that Earl Hakon had thrown off Christianity, and had plundered far and wide in the Danish land. The Danish king levied an army, with which he went to Norway; and when he came to the country which Earl Hakon had to rule over he laid waste the whole land, and came with his fleet to some islands called Solunder. Only five houses were left standing in Læradal; but all the people fled up to the mountains, and into the forest, taking with them all

the moveable goods they could carry with them. Then the Danish king proposed to sail with his fleet to Iceland, to avenge the mockery and scorn all the Icelanders had shown towards him; for they had made a law in Iceland, that they should make as many lampoons against the Danish king as there were headlands in his country; and the reason was, because a vessel which belonged to certain Icelanders was stranded in Denmark, and the Danes took all the property, and called it wreck. One of the king's bailiffs called Birger was to blame for this; but the lampoons were made against both. In the lampoons were the following lines:—

"The gallant Harald in the field
Between his legs lets drop his shield;
Into a pony he was changed,
And kicked his shield, and safely ranged.

And Birger, he who dwells in halls
For safety built with four stone walls,
That these might be a worthy pair,
Was changed into a pony mare."

37.—HARALD SENDS A WARLOCK TO ICELAND.

King Harald told a warlock to hie to Iceland in some altered shape, and to try what he could learn there to tell him: and he set out in the shape of a whale. And when he came near to the land he went to the west side of Iceland, north around the land, where he saw all the mountains and hills full of guardian-spirits, some great, some small. When he came to Vapnafjord he went in towards the land, intending to go on shore; but a huge dragon rushed down the dale against him with a train of serpents, paddocks, and toads, that blew poison towards him. Then he turned to go westward around the land as far as Eyjafjord, and he went into the fjord. Then a bird flew against him, which was so great that its wings

stretched over the mountains on either side of the fjord, and many birds, great and small, with it. Then he swam farther west, and then south into Breidafjord. When he came into the fjord a large grey bull ran against him, wading into the sea, and bellowing fearfully, and he was followed by a crowd of land-spirits. From thence he went round by Reykjanes, and wanted to land at Vikarsskeid, but there came down a hill-giant against him with an iron staff in his hands. He was a head higher than the mountains, and many other giants followed him. He then swam eastward along the land, and there was nothing to see, he said, but sand and vast deserts, and, without the skerries, high-breaking surf; and the ocean between the countries was so wide that a long-ship could not cross it. At that time Brodhelge dwelt in Vapnafjord, Eyjolf Valgerdson in Eyjafjord, Thord Geller in Breidafjord, and Thorod Gode in Olfus. Then the Danish king turned about with his fleet, and sailed back to Denmark.

Hakon the earl settled habitations again in the country that had been laid waste, and paid no scat as long as he lived to Denmark.

38.—HARALD GORMSON'S DEATH.

Svein, King Harald's son, who afterwards was called Tjuguskeg (forked beard), asked his father King Harald for a part of his kingdom; but now, as before, Harald would not listen to dividing the Danish dominions, and giving him a kingdom. Svein collected ships of war, and gave out that he was going on a viking cruise; but

when all his men were assembled, and the Jomsborg viking Palnatoke had come to his assistance he ran into Sealand to Isafjord, where his father had been for some time with his ships ready to proceed on an expedition. Svein instantly gave battle, and the combat was severe. So many people flew to assist King Harald, that Svein was overpowered by numbers, and fled. But King Harald received a wound which ended in his death: and Svein was chosen King of Denmark. At this time Sigvalde was earl over Jomsborg in Vindland. He was a son of King Strutharald, who had ruled over Skane. Heming, and Thorkel the Tall, were Sigvalde's brothers. Bue the Thick from Bornholm, and Sigurd his brother, were also chiefs among the Jomsborg vikings: and also Vagn, a son of Ake and Thorgunna, and a sister's son of Bue and Sigurd. Earl Sigvalde had taken King Svein prisoner, and carried him to Vindland, to Jomsborg, where he had forced him to make peace with Burizleif, the king of the Vinds, and to take him as the peace-maker between them. Earl Sigvalde was married to Astrid, a daughter of King Burizleif; and told King Svein that if he did not accept of his terms, he would deliver him into the hands of the Vinds. The king knew that they would torture him to death, and therefore agreed to accept the earl's mediation. The earl delivered this judgment between them—that King Svein should marry Gunhild, King Burizleif's daughter; and King Burizleif again Thyre, a daughter of Harald, and King Svein's sister; but that each party should retain their own dominions, and there should be peace between the countries. Then King Svein

returned home to Denmark with his wife Gunhild. Their sons were Harald and Knut (Canute) the Great. At that time the Danes threatened much to bring an army into Norway against Earl Hakon.

39.—VOW OF THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

King Svein made a magnificent feast, to which he invited all the chiefs in his dominions; for he would give the succession-feast, or the heirship-ale, after his father Harald. A short time before, Strutharald in Skane, and Vesete in Bornholm, father to Bue the Thick and to Sigurd, had died; and King Svein sent word to the Jomsborg vikings that Earl Sigvalde and Bue, and their brothers, should come to him, and drink the funeral-ale for their fathers in the same feast the king was giving. The Jomsborg vikings came to the festival with their bravest men, forty ships of them from Vindland, and twenty ships from Skane. Great was the multitude of people assembled. The first day of the feast, before King Svein went up into his father's high-seat, he drank the bowl to his father's memory, and made the solemn vow, that before three winters were past he would go over with his army to England, and either kill King Adalrad (Ethelred), or chase him out of the country. This heirship bowl all who were at the feast drank. Thereafter for the chiefs of the Jomsborg vikings was filled and drunk the largest horn to be found, and of the strongest drink. When that bowl was emptied, all men drank Christ's health; and again the fullest measure and the strongest drink were handed to the Jomsborg vik-

ings. The third bowl was to the memory of Saint Michael, which was drunk by all. Thereafter Earl Sigvalde emptied a remembrance bowl to his father's honour, and made the solemn vow, that before three winters came to an end he would go to Norway, and either kill Earl Hakon, or chase him out of the country. Thereupon Thorkel the Tall, his brother, made a solemn vow to follow his brother Sigvalde to Norway, and not flinch from the battle so long as Sigvalde would fight there. Then Bue the Thick vowed to follow them to Norway, and not flinch so long as the other Jomsborg vikings fought. At last Vagn Akason vowed that he would go with them to Norway, and not return until he had slain Thorkel Leira, and gone to bed to his daughter Ingebjorg without her friends' consent. Many other chiefs made solemn vows about different things. Thus was the heirship-ale drunk that day, but the next morning, when the Jomsborg vikings had selpt off their drink, they thought they had spoken more than enough. They held a meeting to consult how they should proceed with their undertaking, and they determined to fit out as speedily as possible for the expedition; and without delay ships and men-at-arms were prepared, and the news spread quickly.

40.—EIRIK AND HAKON MAKE A WAR LEVY.

When Earl Eirik, the son of Hakon, who at that time was in Raumarike, heard the tidings, he immediately gathered troops, and went to the Uplands, and thence over the mountains to Throndhjem, and joined his father Earl Hakon. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this in the lay of Eirik:—

"News from the south are flying round;
The bonde comes with look profound,
Bad news of bloody battles bringing,
Of steel-clad men, of weapons ringing.
I hear that in the Danish land
Long-sided ships slide down the strand,
And, floating with the rising tide,
The ocean-coursers soon will ride."

The earls Hakon and Eirik had war-arrows split up and sent round the Throndhjem country; and despatched messages to both the Mores, North More and South More, and to Raumsdal, and also north to Naumudal and Halogaland. They summoned all the country to provide both men and ships. So it is said in Eirik's lay:

"The skald must now a war-song raise,—
The gallant active youth must praise,
Who o'er the ocean's field spreads forth
Ships, cutters, boats, from the far north.
His mighty fleet comes sailing by,—
From headlands many a mast we spy:
The people run to see them glide,
Mast after mast, by the coast-side."

Earl Hakon set out immediately to the south, to More, to reconnoitre and gather people; and Earl Eirik gathered an army from the north to follow.

41.—EXPEDITION OF THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

The Jomsborg vikings assembled their fleet in Limafjord, from whence they went to sea with sixty sail of vessels. When they came under the coast of Agder, they steered northwards to Rogaland with their fleet, and began to plunder when they came into the earl's territory; and so they sailed north along the coast, plundering and burning. A man, by name Geirmund, sailed in a light boat with a few men northwards to More, and there he fell in with Earl Hakon, stood before his dinner table, and told the earl the tidings of an army from Denmark having come to the south end of the land. The earl asked if he had any certainty of it. Then Geirmund stretched forth one arm, from which the hand was cut

off, and said, "Here is the token that the enemy is in the land." Then the earl questioned him particularly about this army. Geirmund says it consists of Jomsborg vikings, who have killed many people, and plundered all around. "And hastily and hotly they pushed on," says he, "and I expect it will not be long before they are upon you." On this the earl rode into every fjord, going in along the one side of the land and out at the other, collecting men; and thus he drove along night and day. He sent spies out upon the upper ridges, and also southwards into the Fjords; and he proceeded north to meet Eirik with his men. This appears from Eirik's lay:—

"The earl, well skilled in war to speed
O'er the wild wave the viking-steed,
Now launched the high stems from the shore,
Which death to Sigvalde's vikings bore.

Rollers beneath the ships' keels crash,
Oar-blades loud in the grey sea splash,
And they who give the ravens food
Row fearless through the curling flood."

Eirik hastened southwards with his forces the shortest way he could.

42.—OF THE JOMSBORG VIKINGS.

Earl Sigvalde steered with his fleet northwards around Stad, and came to the land at the Herey Isles. Although the vikings fell in with the country people, the people never told the truth about what the earl was doing; and the vikings went on pillaging and laying waste. They laid to their vessels at the outer end of Hod Island, landed, plundered, and drove both men and cattle down to the ships, killing all the men able to bear arms.

As they were going back to their ships, came a bonde, walking near to Bue's troop, who said to them, "Ye are

The fire of battle raged around,—
Odin's steel shirt flew all unbound!
The earl his ring-mail from him flung,
Its steel rings on the wet deck rung;
Part of it fell into the sea,—
A part was kept, a proof to be
How sharp and thick the arrow-flight
Among the sea-steeds in this fight."

44.—EARL SIGVALDE'S FLIGHT.

The Jomsborg vikings had larger and higher-sided ships; and both parties fought desperately. Vagn Akason laid his ship on board of Svein Earl Hakon's son's ship, and Svein allowed his ship to give way, and was on the point of flying. Then Earl Eirik came up, and laid his ship alongside of Vagn, and then Vagn gave way, and the ships came to lie in the same position as before. Thereupon Erirk goes to the other wing, which had gone back a little, and Bue had cut the ropes, intending to pursue them. Then Eirik laid himself, board to board, alongside of Bue's ship, and there was a severe combat hand to hand. Two or three of Eirik's ships then laid themselves upon Bue's single vessel. A thunder-storm came on at this moment, and such a heavy hail-storm that every hailstone weighed a pennyweight. The Earl Sigvalde cut his cable, turned his ship round, and took flight. Vagn Akason called to him not to fly; but as Earl Sigvalde paid no attention to what he said, Vagn threw his spear at him, and hit the man at the helm. Earl Sigvalde rowed away with 35 ships, leaving 25 of his fleet behind.

45.—BUE THROWS HIMSELF OVERBOARD.

Then Earl Hakon laid his ship on the other side of Bue's ship, and now came heavy blows on Bue's men. Vigfus, a son of Vigaglum, took up an anvil with a

sharp end, which lay upon the deck, and on which a man had welded the hilt to his sword just before, and being a very strong man cast the anvil with both hands at the head of Aslak Holmskalle, and the end of it went into his brains. Before this no weapon could wound this Aslak, who was Bue's foster-brother, and forecastle commander, although he could wound right and left. Another man among the strongest and bravest was Havard Hoggande. In this attack Eirik's men boarded Bue's ship, and went aft to the quarter-deck where Bue stood. There Thorstein Midlang cut at Bue across his nose, so that the nose-piece of his helmet was cut in two, and he got a great wound; but Bue, in turn, cut at Thorstein's side, so that the sword cut the man through. Then Bue lifted up two chests full of gold, and called aloud, "Overboard all Bue's men," and threw himself overboard with his two chests. Many of his people sprang overboard with him. Some fell in the ship, for it was of no use to call for quarter. Bue's ship was cleared of people from stem to stern, and afterwards all the others, the one after the other.

46.—VIKINGS BOUND TOGETHER IN ONE CHAIN.

Earl Eirik then laid himself alongside of Vagn's ship, and there was a brave defence; but at last this ship too was cleared, and Vagn and thirty men were taken prisoners, and bound, and brought to land. Then came up Thorkel Leira, and said, "Thou madest a solemn vow, Vagn, to kill me; but now it seems more likely that I will kill thee." Vagn and his men sat all upon a log of

wood together. Thorkel had an axe in his hands, with which he cut at him who sat outmost on the log. Vagn and the other prisoners were bound so that a rope was fastened on their feet, but they had their hands free. One of them said, "I will stick this cloak-pin that I have in my hand into the earth, if it be so that I know anything, after my head is cut off." His head was cut off, but the cloak-pin fell from his hand. There sat also a very handsome man with long hair, who twisted his hair over his head, put out his neck, and said, "Don't make my hair bloody." A man took the hair in his hands and held it fast. Thorkel hewed with his axe; but the viking twitched his head so strongly that he who was holding his hair fell forwards, and the axe cut off both his hands, and stuck fast in the earth. Then Earl Eirik came up, and asked, "Who is that handsome man?"

He replies, "I am called Sigurd, and am Bue's son. But are all the Jomsborg vikings dead?"

Eirik says, "Thou art certainly Bue's son. Wilt thou now take life and peace?"

"That depends," says he, "upon who it is that offers it."

"He offers who has the power to do it—Earl Eirik."

"That will I," says he, "from his hands." And now the rope was loosened from him.

Then said Thorkel Leira, "Although thou should give all these men life and peace, earl, Vagn Akason shall never come from this with life." And he ran at him with uplifted axe; but the viking Skarde swung himself in the rope, and let himself fall just before Thorkel's feet, so that Thorkel fell over him, and Vagn caught the axe

and gave Thorkel a death-wound. Then said the earl, "Vagn, wilt thou accept life?"

"That I will," says he, "if you give it to all of us."

"Loose them from the rope," said the earl; and it was done. Eighteen were killed, and twelve got their lives.

47.—DEATH OF GISSUR OF VALDERS.

Earl Hakon, and many with him, were sitting upon a piece of wood, and a bow-string twanged from Bue's ship, and the arrow struck Gissur from Valders, who was sitting next the earl, and was clothed splendidly. Thereupon the people went on board, and found Havard Hoggande standing on his knees at the ship's railing, for his feet had been cut off,[1] and he had a bow in his hand. When they came on board the ship Havard asked, "Who fell by that shaft?"

They answered, "A man called Gissur."

"Then my luck was less than I thought," said he.

"Great enough was the misfortune," replied they; "but thou shalt not make it greater." And they killed him on the spot.

The dead were then ransacked, and the booty brought all together to be divided; and there were twenty-five ships of the Jomsborg vikings in the booty. So says Tind:

"Many a viking's body lay
Dead on the deck this bloody day,
Before they cut their sun-dried ropes,
And in quick flight put all their hopes.
He whom the ravens know afar
Cleared five-and-twenty ships of war:
A proof that in the furious fight
None can withstand the Norsemen's might."

Then the army dispersed. Earl Hakon went to

[1]This traditionary tale of a warrior fighting on his knees after his legs were cut off, appears to have been a popular idea among the Northmen, and is related by their descendants in the ballad of Chevy Chase.—L.

Throndhjem, and was much displeased that Earl Eirik had given quarter to Vagn Akason. It was said that at this battle Earl Hakon had sacrificed for victory his son, young Erling, to the gods; and instantly came the hail-storm, and the defeat and slaughter of the Jomsborg vikings.

Earl Eirik went to the Uplands, and eastward by that route to his own kingdom, taking Vagn Akason with him. Earl Eirik married Vagu to Ingebiorg, a daughter of Thorkel Leira, and gave him a good ship of war and all belonging to it, and a crew; and they parted the best of friends. Then Vagn went home south to Denmark, and became afterwards a man of great consideration, and many great people are descended from him.

48.—KING HARALD GRENSKE'S DEATH.

Harald Grenske, as before related, was king in Vestfold, and was married to Asta, a daughter of Gudbrand Kula. One summer (994) Harald Grenske made an expedition to the Baltic to gather property, and he came to Svithjod. Olaf the Swede was king there, a son of Eirik the Victorious, and Sigrid, a daughter of Skoglartoste. Sigrid was then a widow, and had many and great estates in Svithjod. When she heard that her foster-brother was come to the country a short distance from her, she sent men to him to invite him to a feast. He did not neglect the invitation, but came to her with a great attendance of his followers, and was received in the most friendly way. He and the queen sat in the high-seat, and drank together towards the evening, and all his men were

entertained in the most hospitable manner. At night, when the king went to rest, a bed was put up for him with a hanging of fine linen around it, and with costly bed-clothes; but in the lodging-house there were few men. When the king was undressed, and had gone to bed, the queen came to him, filled a bowl herself for him to drink, and was very gay, and pressed him to drink. The king was drunk above measure, and, indeed, so were they both. Then he slept, and the queen went away, and laid herself down also. Sigrid was a woman of the greatest understanding, and clever in many things. In the morning there was also the most excellent entertainment; but then it went on as usual when people have drunk too much, that next day they take care not to exceed. The queen was very gay, and she and the king talked of many things with each other; among other things she valued her property, and the dominions she had in Svithjod, as nothing less than his kingdom and property in Norway. With that observation the king was nowise pleased; and he found no pleasure in anything after that, but made himself ready for his journey in an ill humor. On the other hand, the queen was remarkably gay, and made him many presents, and followed him out to the road. Now Harald returned about harvest to Norway, and was at home all winter; but was very silent and cast down. In summer he went once more to the Baltic with his ships, and steered to Svithjod. He sent a message to Queen Sigrid that he wished to have a meeting with her, and she rode down to meet him. They talked together, and he soon brought out the proposal that she should

marry him. She replied, that this was foolish talk for him, who was so well married already that he might think himself well off. Harald says, "Asta is a good and clever woman; but she is not so well born as I am." Sigrid replies, "It may be that thou art of higher birth, but I think she is now pregnant with both your fortunes." They exchanged but few words more before the queen rode away. King Harald was now depressed in mind, and prepared himself again to ride up the country to meet Queen Sigrid. Many of his people dissuaded him; but nevertheless he set off with a great attendance, and came to the house in which the queen dwelt. The same evening came another king, called Vissavald, from Gardarike (Russia), likewise to pay his addresses to Queen Sigrid. Lodging was given to both the kings, and to all their people, in a great old room of an outbuilding, and all the furniture was of the same character; but there was no want of drink in the evening, and that so strong that all were drunk, and the watch, both inside and outside, fell fast asleep. Then Queen Sigrid ordered an attack on them in the night, both with fire and sword. The house was burnt, with all who were in it and those who slipped out were put to the sword. Sigrid said that she would make these small kings tired of coming to court her. She was afterwards called Sigrid the Haughty (Storrada).

49.—BIRTH OF OLAF, SON OF HARALD GRENSKE.

This happened the winter after the battle of the Jomsborg vikings at Hjorungavag. When Harald went up

the country after Sigrid, he left Hrane behind with the ships to look after the men. Now when Hrane heard that Harald was cut off, he returned to Norway the shortest way he could, and told the news. He repaired first to Asta, and related to her all that had happened on the journey, and also on what errand Harald had visited Queen Sigrid. When Asta got these tidings she set off directly to her father to the Uplands, who received her well; but both were enraged at the design which had been laid in Svithjod, and that King Harald had intended to set her in a single condition. In summer (995) Asta, Gudbrand's daughter, was confined, and had a boy-child, who had water poured over him, and was called Olaf. Hrane himself poured water over him, and the child was brought up at first in the house of Gudbrand and his mother Asta.

50.—ABOUT EARL HAKON.

Earl Hakon ruled over the whole outer part of Norway that lies on the sea, and had thus sixteen districts under his sway. The arrangement introduced by Harald Harfager, that there should be an earl in each district, was afterward continued for a long time; and thus Earl Hakon had sixteen earls under him. So says the "Vellekla:"—

"Who before has ever known
Sixteen earls subdued by one?
Who has seen all Norway's land
Conquered by one brave hero's hand?
It will be long in memory held,
How Hakon ruled by sword and shield.
When tales at the viking's mast go round,
His praise will every mouth resound."

While Earl Hakon ruled over Norway there were good crops in the land, and peace was well preserved in

the country among the bondes. The earl, for the greater part of his lifetime, was therefore much beloved by the bondes; but it happened, in the longer course of time, that the earl became very intemperate in his intercourse with women, and even carried it so far that he made the daughters of people of consideration be carried away, and brought home to him; and after keeping them a week or two as concubines, he sent them home. He drew upon himself the indignation of the relations of these girls; and the bondes began to murmur loudly, as the Throndhjem people have the custom of doing when anything goes against their judgment.

51.—THORER KLAKKA'S JOURNEY.

Earl Hakon, in the mean time, hears some whisper that to the westward, over the North sea, was a man called Ole, who was looked upon as a king. From the conversation of some people, he fell upon the suspicion that he must be of the royal race of Norway. It was, indeed, said that this Ole was from Russia; but the earl had heard that Trygve Olafson had had a son called Olaf, who in his infancy had gone east to Gardarike, and had been brought up by King Valdemar. The earl had carefully inquired about this man, and had his suspicion that he must be the same person who had now come to these western countries. The earl had a very good friend called Thorer Klakka, who had been long upon viking expeditions,—sometimes also upon merchant voyages; so that he was well acquainted all around. This Thorer Earl Hakon sends over the North sea, and told him to

make a merchant voyage to Dublin, as many were in the habit of doing, and carefully to discover who this Ole was. Provided he got any certainty that he was Olaf Trygvason, or any other of the Norwegian royal race, then Thorer should endeavor to ensnare him by some deceit, and bring him into the earl's power.

52.—OLAF TRYGVASON COMES TO NORWAY.

On this Thorer sails westward to Ireland, and hears that Ole is in Dublin with his wife's father King Olaf Kvaran. Thorer, who was a plausible man, immediately got acquainted with Ole; and as they often met, and had long conversations together, Ole began to inquire about news from Norway, and above all of the Upland kings and great people,—which of them were in life, and what dominations they now had. He asked also about Earl Hakon, and if he was much liked in the country. Thorer replies, that the earl is such a powerful man that no one dares to speak otherwise than he would like; but that comes from there being nobody else in the country to look to. "Yet, to say the truth, I know it to be the mind of many brave men, and of whole communities, that they would much rather see a king of Harald Harfager's race come to the kingdom. But we know of no one suited for this, especially now that it is proved how vain every attack on Earl Hakon must be." As they often talked together in the same strain, Olaf disclosed to Thorer his name and family, and asked him his opinion, and whether he thought the bondes would take him for their king if he were to appear in Norway. Thorer en-

couraged him very eagerly to the enterprise, and praised him and his talents highly. Then Olaf's inclination to go to the heritage of his ancestors became strong. Olaf sailed accordingly, accompanied by Thorer, with five ships; first to the Hebrides, and from thence to the Orkneys. At that time Earl Sigurd, Hlodver's son, lay in Osmundswall, in the island South Ronaldsa, with a ship of war, on his way to Caithness. Just at the same time Olaf was sailing with his fleet from the westward to the islands, and ran into the same harbour, because Pentland Firth was not to be passed at that tide. When the king was informed that the earl was there, he made him be called; and when the earl came on board to speak with the king, after a few words only had passed between them, the king says the earl must allow himself to be baptized, and all the people of the country also, or he should be put to death directly; and he assured the earl he would lay waste the islands with fire and sword, if the people did not adopt Christianity. In the position the earl found himself, he preferred becoming Christian, and he and all who were with him were baptized. Afterwards the earl took an oath to the king, went into his service, and gave him his son, whose name was Hvelp (Whelp), or Hunde (Dog), as an hostage; and the king took Hvelp to Norway with him. Thereafter Olaf went out to sea to the eastward, and made the land at Morster Island, where he first touched the ground of Norway. He had high mass sung in a tent, and afterwards on the spot a church was built. Thorer Klakka said now to the king, that the best plan for him would be not to make it known who

he was, or to let any report about him get abroad; but to seek out Earl Hakon as fast as possible, and fall upon him by surprise. King Olaf did so, sailing northward day and night, when wind permitted, and did not let the people of the country know who it was that was sailing in such haste. When he came north to Agdanes, he heard that the earl was in the fjord, and was in discord with the bondes. On hearing this, Thorer saw that things were going in a very different way from what he expected; for after the battle with the Jomsborg vikings all men in Norway were the most sincere friends of the earl on account of the victory he had gained, and of the peace and security he had given to the country; and now it unfortunately turns out that a great chief has come to the country at a time when the bondes are in arms against the earl.

53.—EARL HAKON'S FLIGHT.

Earl Hakon was at a feast in Medalhus in Gaulardal and his ships lay out by Viggja. There was a powerful bonde, by name Orm Lyrgja, who dwelt in Bunes, who had a wife called Gudrun, a daughter of Bergthor of Lundar. She was called the Lundasol; for she was the most beautiful of women. The earl sent his slaves to Orm, with the errand that they should bring Orm's wife, Gudrun, to the earl. The thralls tell their errand, and Orm bids them first seat themselves to supper; but before they had done eating, many people from the neighbourhood, to whom Orm had sent notice, had gathered together: and now Orm declared he would not send Gud-

run with the messengers. Gudrun told the thralls to tell the earl that she would not come to him, unless he sent Thora of Rimul after her. Thora was a woman of great influence, and one of the earl's best beloved. The thralls say that they will come another time, and both the bonde and his wife would be made to repent of it; and they departed with many threats. Orm, on the other hand, sent out a message-token to all the neighbouring country, and with it the message to attack Earl Hakon with weapons and kill him. He sent also a message to Haldor in Skerdingsstedja, who also sent out his message-token. A short time before, the earl had taken away the wife of a man called Brynjolf, and there had very nearly been an insurrection about that business. Having now again got this message-token, the people made a general revolt, and set out all to Medalhus. When the earl heard of this, he left the house with his followers, and concealed himself in a deep glen, now called Jarlsdal (Earl's Dale). Later in the day, the earl got news of the bondes' army. They had beset all the roads; but believed the earl had escaped to his ships, which his son Erlend, a remarkably handsome and hopeful young man, had the command of. When night came the earl dispersed his people, and ordered them to go through the forest roads into Orkadal; "for nobody will molest you," said he, "when I am not with you. Send a message to Erlend to sail out of the fjord, and meet me in More. In the mean time I will conceal myself from the bondes." Then the earl went his way with one thrall or slave, called Kark, attending him. There was ice upon the

Gaul (the river of Gaulardal), and the earl drove his horse upon it, and left his coat lying upon the ice. They then went to a hole, since called Jarlshella (the Earl's Hole), where they slept. When Kark awoke he told his dream, —that a black threatening man had come into the hole, and was angry that people should have entered it; and that the man had said, "Ulle is dead." The earl said that his son Erlend must be killed. Kark slept again, and was again disturbed in his sleep; and when he awoke he told his dream,—that the same man had again appeared to him, and bade him tell the earl that all the sounds were closed. From this dream the earl began to suspect that it betokened a short life to him. They stood up, and went to the house of Rimul. The earl now sends Kark to Thora, and begs of her to come secretly to him. She did so and received the earl kindly and he begged her to conceal him for a few nights until the army of the bondes had dispersed. "Here about my house," said she, "you will be hunted after, both inside and outside; for many know that I would willingly help you if I can. There is but one place about the house where they could never expect to find such a man as you, and that is the swine-stye." When they came there the earl said, "Well, let it be made ready for us; as to save our life is the first and foremost concern." The slave dug a great hole in it, bore away the earth that he dug out, and laid wood over it. Thora brought the tidings to the earl that Olaf Trygvason had come from sea into the fjord, and had killed his son Erlend. Then the earl and Kark both went into the hole. Thora covered it with wood, and

threw earth and dung over it, and drove the swine upon the top of it. The swine-stye was under a great stone.

54.—ERLEND'S DEATH.

Olaf Trygvason came from sea into the fjord with five long-ships, and Erlend, Earl Hakon's son, rowed towards him with three ships. When the vessels came near to each other, Erlend suspected they might be enemies, and turned towards the land. When Olaf and his followers saw long-ships coming in haste out of the fjord, and rowing towards them, they thought Earl Hakon must be here; and they put out all oars to follow them. As soon as Erlend and his ships got near the land they rowed aground instantly, jumped overboard, and took to the land; but at the same instant Olaf's ship came up with them. Olaf saw a remarkably handsome man swimming in the water, and laid hold of a tiller and threw it at him. The tiller struck Erlend, the son of Hakon the earl, on the head, and clove it to the brain; and there left Erlend his life. Olaf and his people killed many; but some escaped, and some were made prisoners, and got life and freedom that they might go and tell what had happened. They learned then that the bondes had driven away Earl Hakon, and that he had fled, and his troops were all dispersed.

55.—EARL HAKON'S DEATH.

The bondes then met Olaf, to the joy of both, and they made an agreement together. The bondes took Olaf to be their king, and resolved, one and all, to seek out Earl Hakon. They went up Gaulardal; for it seemed to them

likely that if the earl was concealed in any house it must be at Rimul, for Thora was his dearest friend in that valley. They come up, therefore, and search everywhere, outside and inside the house, but could not find him. Then Olaf held a House Thing (husting), or council out in the yard, and stood upon a great stone which lay beside the swine-stye, and made a speech to the people, in which he promised to enrich the man with rewards and honours who should kill the earl. This speech was heard by the earl and the thrall Kark. They had a light in their room.

"Why art thou so pale," says the earl, "and now again black as earth? Thou hast not the intention to betray me?"

"By no means," replies Kark.

"We were born on the same night," says the earl, "and the time will be short between our deaths."

King Olaf went away in the evening. When night came the earl kept himself awake; but Kark slept, and was disturbed in his sleep. The earl woke him, and asked him "what he was dreaming of?"

He answered, "I was at Hlader and Olaf Trygvason was laying a gold ring about my neck."

The earl says, "It will be a red ring Olaf will lay about thy neck if he catches thee. Take care of that! From me thou shalt enjoy all that is good, therefore betray me not."

They then kept themselves awake both; the one, as it were, watching upon the other. But towards day the earl suddenly dropped asleep; but his sleep was so unquiet that

he drew his heels under him, and raised his neck, as if going to rise, and screamed dreadfully high. On this Kark, dreadfully alarmed, drew a large knife out of his belt, stuck it in the earl's throat, and cut it across, and killed Earl Hakon. Then Kark cut off the earl's head, and ran away. Late in the day he came to Hlader, where he delivered the earl's head to King Olaf, and told all these circumstances of his own and Earl Hakon's doings. Olaf had him taken out and beheaded.

56.—EARL HAKON'S HEAD.

King Olaf, and a vast number of bondes with him, then went out to Nidarholm, and had with him the heads of Earl Hakon and Kark. This holm was used then for a place of execution of thieves and ill-doers, and there stood a gallows on it. He had the heads of the earl and of Kark hung upon it, and the whole army of the bondes cast stones at them, screaming and shouting that the one worthless fellow had followed the other. They then sent up to Gaulardal for the earl's dead body. So great was the enmity of the Throndhjem people against Earl Hakon, that no man could venture to call him by any other name than Hakon the Bad; and he was so called long after those days. Yet, sooth to say of Earl Hakon, he was in many respects fitted to be a chief: first, because he was descended from a high race; then because he had understanding and knowledge to direct a government; also manly courage in battle to gain victories, and good luck in killing his enemies. So says Thorleif Raudfeldson:—

"In Norway's land was never known
A braver earl than the brave Hakon.
At sea, beneath the clear moon's light,
No braver man e'er sought to fight.
Nine kings to Odin's wide domain
Were sent, by Hakon's right hand slain!
So well the raven-flocks were fed—
So well the wolves were filled with dead!"

Earl Hakon was very generous; but the greatest misfortunes attended even such a chief at the end of his days: and the great cause of this was that the time was come when heathen sacrifices and idolatrous worship were doomed to fall, and the holy faith and good customs to come in their place.

57.—OLAF TRYGVASON ELECTED KING.

Olaf Trygvason was chosen at Throndhjem by the General Thing to be the king over the whole country, as Harald Harfager had been. The whole public and the people throughout all the land would listen to nothing else than that Olaf Trygvason should be king. Then Olaf went round the whole country, and brought it under his rule, and all the people of Norway gave in their submission; and also the chiefs in the Uplands and in Viken, who before had held their lands as fiefs from the Danish king, now became King Olaf's men, and held their lands from him. He went thus through the whole country during the first winter (996) and the following summer. Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, his brother Svein, and their friends and relations, fled out of the country, and went east to Sweden to King Olaf the Swede, who gave them a good reception. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

"O thou whom bad men drove away,
After the bondes, by foul play,
Took Hakon's life! Fate will pursue
These bloody wolves, and make them rue.
When the host came from out the West,
Like some tall stately war-ship's mast,
I saw the son of Trygve stand,
Surveying proud his native land."

And again,—

"Eirik has more upon his mind,
Against the new Norse king designed,
Than by his words he seems to show—
And truly it may well be so.
Stubborn and stiff are Throndhjem men,
But Throndhjem's earl may come again;
In Swedish land he knows no rest—
Fierce wrath is gathering in his breast."

58.—LODIN'S MARRIAGE.

Lodin was the name of a man from Viken who was rich and of good family. He went often on merchant voyages, and sometimes on viking cruises. It happened one summer that he went on a merchant voyage with much merchandise in a ship of his own. He directed his course first to Eistland, and was there at a market in summer. To the place at which the market was held many merchant goods were brought, and also many thralls or slaves for sale. There Lodin saw a woman who was to be sold as a slave; and on looking at her he knew her to be Astrid, Eirik's daughter, who had been married to King Trygve. But now she was altogether unlike what she had been when he last saw her; for now she was pale, meagre in countenance, and ill clad. He went up to her, and asked her how matters stood with her. She replied, "It is heavy to be told; for I have been sold as a slave, and now again I am brought here for sale." After speaking together a little Astrid knew him, and begged him to buy her, and bring her home to her friends. "On this condition," said he, "I will bring thee home to Norway,—that thou wilt marry me." Now as Astrid stood in great need, and moreover knew that Lodin was a man of high birth, rich, and brave, she promised to do so for

her ransom. Lodin accordingly bought Astrid, took her home to Norway with him, and married her with her friends' consent. Their children were Thorkel Nefia, Ingerid, and Ingegerd. Ingebjorg and Astrid were daughters of Astrid by King Trygve. Eirik Bjodaskalle's sons were Sigurd, Karlshofud, Jostein, and Thorkel Dydril, who were all rich and brave people who had estates east in the country. In Viken in the east dwelt two brothers, rich and of good descent; one called Thorgeir, and the other Hyrning; and they married Lodin and Astrid's daughters, Ingerid and Ingegerd.

59.—OLAF BAPTIZES THE COUNTRY OF VIKEN.

When Harald Gormson, king of Denmark, had adopted Christianity, he sent a message over all his kingdom that all people should be baptized, and converted to the true faith. He himself followed his message, and used power and violence where nothing else would do. He sent two earls, Urguthrjot and Brimilskjar, with many people to Norway, to proclaim Christianity there. In Viken, which stood directly under the king's power, this succeeded, and many were baptized of the country folk. But when Svein Forked-beard, immediately after his father King Harald's death, went out on war expeditions in Saxland, Frisland, and at last in England, the Northmen who had taken up Christianity returned back to heathen sacrifices, just as before; and the people in the north of the country did the same. But now that Olaf Trygvason was king of Norway, he remained long during the summer (996) in Viken, where many of his relatives and some of his

brothers-in-law were settled, and also many who had been great friends of his father; so that he was received with the greatest affection. Olaf called together his mother's brothers, his stepfather Lodin, and his brothers-in-law Thorgeir and Hyrning, to speak with them, and to disclose with the greatest care the business which he desired they themselves should approve of, and support with all their power; namely, the proclaiming Christianity over all his kingdom. He would, he declared, either bring it to this, that all Norway should be Christian, or die. "I shall make you all," said he, "great and mighty men in promoting this work; for I trust to you most, as blood relations or brothers-in-law." All agreed to do what he asked, and to follow him in what he desired. King Olaf immediately made it known to the public that he recommended Christianity to all the people in his kingdom, which message was well received and approved of by those who had before given him their promise; and these being the most powerful among the people assembled, the others followed their example, and all the inhabitants of the east part of Viken allowed themselves to be baptized. The king then went to the north part of Viken and invited every man to accept Christianity; and those who opposed him he punished severely, killing some, mutilating others, and driving some into banishment. At length he brought it so far, that all the kingdom which his father King Trygve had ruled over, and also that of his relation Harald Grenske, accepted of Christianity; and during that summer (996) and the following winter (997) all Viken was made Christian.

60.—OF THE HORDALAND PEOPLE.

Early in spring (997) King Olaf set out from Viken with a great force northwards to Agder, and proclaimed that every man should be baptized. And thus the people received Christianity, for nobody dared oppose the king's will, wheresoever he came. In Hordaland, however, were many bold and great men of Hordakare's race. He, namely, had left four sons,—the first Thorleif Spake; the second, Ogmund, father of Thorolf Skialg, who was father of Erling of Sole; the third was Thord, father of the Herse Klyp who killed King Sigurd Slefa, Gunhild's son; and lastly, Olmod, father of Askel, whose son was Aslak Fitjaskalle; and that family branch was the greatest and most considered in Hordaland. Now when this family heard the bad tidings, that the king was coming along the country from the eastward with a great force, and was breaking the ancient law of the people, and imposing punishment and hard conditions on all who opposed him, the relatives appointed a meeting to take counsel with each other, for they knew the king would come down upon them at once; and they all resolved to appear in force at the Gula-Thing, there to hold a conference with King Olaf Trygvason.

61.—ROGALAND BAPTIZED.

When King Olaf came to Rogaland, he immediately summoned the people to a Thing; and when the bondes received the message-token for a Thing, they assembled in great numbers well armed. After they had come together, they resolved to choose three men, the best speak-

ers of the whole, who should answer King Olaf, and argue with the king; and especially should decline to accept of anything against the old law, even if the king should require it of them. Now when the bondes came to the Thing, and the Thing was formed, King Olaf arose, and at first spoke good-humoredly to the people; but they observed he wanted them to accept Christianity, with all his fine words: and in the conclusion he let them know that those who should speak against him, and not submit to his proposal, must expect his displeasure and punishment, and all the ill that it was in his power to inflict. When he had ended his speech, one of the bondes stood up, who was considered the most eloquent, and who had been chosen as the first who should reply to King Olaf. But when he would begin to speak such a cough seized him, and such a difficulty of breathing, that he could not bring out a word, and had to sit down again. Then another bonde stood up, resolved not to let an answer be wanting, although it had gone so ill with the former: but he stammered so that he could not get a word uttered, and all present set up a laughter, amid which the bonde sat down again. And now the third stood up to make a speech against King Olaf's; but when he began he became so hoarse and husky in his throat, that nobdy could hear a word he said, and he also had to sit down. There was none of the bondes now to speak against the king, and as nobody answered him there was no opposition; and it came to this, that all agreed to what the king had proposed. All the people of the Thing accordingly were baptized before the Thing was dissolved.

62.—ERLING SKJALGSON'S WOOING.

King Olaf went with his men-at-rams to the Gula-Thing; for the bondes had sent him word that they would reply there to his speech. When both parties had come to the Thing, the king desired first to have a conference with the chief people of the country; and when the meeting was numerous the king set forth his errand,—that he desired them, according to his proposal, to allow themselves to be baptized. Then said Olmod the Old, "We relations have considered together this matter, and have come to one resolution. If thou thinkest, king, to force us who are related together to such things as to break our old law, or to bring us under thyself by any sort of violence, then will we stand against thee with all our might: and be the victory to him to whom fate ordains it. But if thou, king, wilt advance our relations' fortunes, then thou shalt have leave to do as thou desirest, and we will all serve thee with zeal in thy purpose."

The king replies, "What do you propose for obtaining this agreement?"

Then answers Olmod, "The first is, that thou wilt give thy sister Astrid in marriage to Erling Skjalgson, our relation, whom we look upon as the most hopeful young man in all Norway."

King Olaf replied, that this marriage appeared to him also very suitable; "as Erling is a man of good birth, and a good-looking man in appearance: but Astrid herself must answer to this proposal."

Thereupon the king spoke to his sister. She said, "It is but of little use that I am a king's sister, and a

king's daughter, if I must marry a man who has no high dignity or office. I will rather wait a few years for a better match." Thus ended this conference.

63.—HORDALAND BAPTIZED.

King Olaf took a falcon that belonged to Astrid, plucked off all its feathers, and then sent it to her. Then said Astrid, "Angry is my brother." And she stood up, and went to the king, who received her kindly; and she said that she left it to the king to determine her marriage. "I think," said the king, "that I must have power enough in this land to raise any man I please to high dignity." Then the king ordered Olmod and Erling to be called to a conference, and all their relations; and the marriage was determined upon, and Astrid betrothed to Erling. Thereafter the king held the Thing, and recommended Christianity to the bondes; and as Olmod, and Erling, and all their relations, took upon themselves the most active part in forwarding the king's desire, nobody dared to speak against it; and all the people were baptized, and adopted Christianity.

64.—ERLING SKJALGSON'S WEDDING.

Erling Skjalgson held his wedding in summer, and a great many people were assembled at it. King Olaf was also there, and offered Erling an earldom. Erling replied thus: "All my relations have been herses only, and I will take no higher title than they have; but this I will accept from thee, king, that thou makest me the greatest of that title in the country." The king consented; and at his departure the king invested his brother-in-law Er-

ling with all the land north of the Sognefiord, and east to the Lidandisnes, on the same terms as Harald Harfager had given land to his sons, as before related.

65.—RAUMSDAL AND FJORD-DISTRICTS BAPTIZED.

The same harvest King Olaf summoned the bondes to a Thing of the four districts at Dragseid, in Stad; and there the people from Sogn, the Fjord-districts, South More, and Raumsdal, were summoned to meet. King Olaf came there with a great many people who had followed him from the eastward, and also with those who had joined him from Rogaland and Hordaland. When the king came to the Thing, he proposed to them there, as elsewhere, Christianity; and as the king had such a powerful host with him, they were frightened. The king offered them two conditions,—either to accept Christianity, or to fight. But the bondes saw they were in no condition to fight the king, and resolved, therefore, that all the people should agree to be baptized. The king proceeded afterwards to North More, and baptized all that district. He then sailed to Hlader, in Throndhjem; had the temple there razed to the ground; took all the ornaments and all property out of the temple, and from the gods in it; and among other things the great gold ring which Earl Hakon had ordered to be made, and which hung in the door of the temple; and then had the temple burnt. But when the bondes heard of this, they sent out a war-arrow as a token through the whole district, ordering out a warlike force, and intended to meet the king with it. In the meantime King Olaf sailed with a war-

force out of the fjord along the coast northward, intending to proceed to Halogaland, and baptize there. When he came north to Bjarnaurar, he heard from Halogaland that a force was assembled there to defend the country against the king. The chiefs of this force were Harek of Thjotta, Thorer Hjort from Vagar, and Eyvind Kinrifa. Now when King Olaf heard this, he turned about and sailed southwards along the land; and when he got south of Stad proceeded at his leisure, and came early in winter (998) all the way east to Viken.

66.—OLAF PROPOSES MARRIAGE TO QUEEN SIGRID.

Queen Sigrid in Svithjod, who had for surname the Haughty, sat in her mansion, and during the same winter messengers went between King Olaf and Sigrid to propose his courtship to her, and she had no objection; and the matter was fully and fast resolved upon. Thereupon King Olaf sent to Queen Sigrid the great gold ring he had taken from the temple door of Hlader, which was considered a distinguished ornament. The meeting for concluding the business was appointed to be in spring on the frontier, at the Gaut river. Now the ring which King Olaf had sent Queen Sigrid was highly prized by all men; yet the queen's gold-smiths, two brothers, who took the ring in their hands, and weighed it, spoke quietly to each other about it, and in a manner that made the queen call them to her, and ask "what they smiled at?" But they would not say a word, and she commanded them to say what it was they had discovered. Then they said the ring is false. Upon this she ordered the ring to be

broken into pieces, and it was found to be copper inside. Then the queen was enraged, and said that Olaf would deceive her in more ways than this one. In the same year (998) King Olaf went into Ringerike, and there the people also were baptized.

67.—OLAF HARALDSON BAPTIZED.

Asta, the daughter of Gudbrand, soon after the fall of Harald Grenske married again a man who was called Sigurd Syr, who was a king in Ringerike. Sigurd was a son of Halfdan, and grandson of Sigurd Hrise, who was a son of Harald Harfager. Olaf, the son of Asta and Harald Grenske, lived with Asta, and was brought up from childhood in the house of his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. Now when King Olaf Trygvason came to Ringerike to spread Christianity, Sigurd Syr and his wife allowed themselves to be baptized, along with Olaf her son; and Olaf Trygvason was godfather to Olaf, the stepson of Harald Grenske. Olaf was then three years old. Olaf returned from thence to Viken, where he remained all winter. He had now been three years king in Norway (998).

68.—MEETING OF OLAF AND SIGRID.

Early in spring (998) King Olaf went eastwards to Konungahella to the meeting with Queen Sigrid; and when they met the business was considered about which the winter before they had held communication, namely, their marriage; and the business seemed likely to be concluded. But when Olaf insisted that Sigrid should let

herself be baptized, she answered thus:—"I must not part from the faith which I have held, and my forefathers before me; and, on the other hand, I shall make no objection to your believing in the god that pleases you best." Then King Olaf was enraged, and answered in a passion, 'Why should I care to have thee, an old faded woman, and a heathen jade?" and therewith struck her in the face with his glove which he held in his hands, rose up, and they parted. Sigrid said, "This may some day be thy death." The king set off to Viken, the queen to Svithjod.

69.—THE BURNING OF WARLOCKS.

Then the king proceeded to Tunsberg, and held a Thing, at which he declared in a speech that all the men of whom it should be known to a certainty that they dealt with evil spirits, or in witchcraft, or were sorcerers, should be banished forth of the land. Thereafter the king had all the neighborhood ransacked after such people, and called them all before him; and when they were brought to the Thing there was a man among them called Eyvind Kelda, a grandson of Ragnvald Rettilbeine, Harald Harfager's son. Eyvind was a sorcerer, and particularly knowing in witchcraft. The king let all these men be seated in one room, which was well adorned, and made a great feast for them, and gave them strong drink in plenty. Now when they were all very drunk, he ordered the house be set on fire, and it and all the people within it were consumed, all but Eyvind Kelda, who contrived to escape by the smoke-hole in the roof. And when he

had got a long way off, he met some people on the road going to the king, and he told them to tell the king that Eyvind Kelda had slipped away from the fire, and would never come again in King Olaf's power, but would carry on his arts of witchcraft as much as ever. When the people came to the king with such a message from Eyvind, the king was ill pleased that Eyvind had escaped death.

70.—EYVIND KELDA'S DEATH.

When spring (998) came King Olaf went out to Viken, and was on visits to his great farms. He sent notice over all Viken that he would call out an army in summer, and proceed to the north parts of the country. Then he went north to Agder; and when Easter was approaching he took the road to Rogaland with 300 (=360) men, and came on Easter evening north to Ogvaldsnes, in Kormt Island, where an Easter feast was prepared for him. That same night came Eyvind Kelda to the island with a well-manned long-ship, of which the whole crew consisted of sorcerers and other dealers with evil spirits. Eyvind went from his ship to the land with his followers, and there they played many of their pranks of witchcraft. Eyvind clothed them with caps of darkness, and so thick a mist that the king and his men could see nothing of them; but when they came near to the house at Ogvaldsnes, it became clear day. Then it went differently from what Eyvind had intended; for now there came just such a darkness over him and his comrades in witchcraft as they had made before, so that they could see no more

from their eyes than from the back of their heads, but went round and round in a circle upon the island. When the king's watchman saw them going about, without knowing what people these were, they told the king. Thereupon he rose up with his people, put on his clothes, and when he saw Eyvind with his men wandering about he ordered his men to arm, and examine what folk these were. The king's men discovered it was Eyvind, took him and all his company prisoners, and brought them to the king. Eyvind now told all he had done on his journey. Then the king ordered them all to be taken out to a skerry which was under water in flood tide, and there to be left bound. Eyvind and all with him left their lives on this rock, and the skerry is still called Skrattasker.

71.—OLAF AND ODIN'S APPARITION.

It is related that once on a time King Olaf was at a feast at this Ogvaldsnes, and one eventide there came to him an old man very gifted in words, and with a broad-brimmed hat upon his head. He was one-eyed, and had something to tell of every land. He entered into conversation with the king; and as the king found much pleasure in the guest's speech, he asked him concerning many things, to which the guest gave good answers: and the king sat up late in the evening. Among other things, the king asked him if he knew who the Ogvald had been who had given his name both to the ness and to the house. The guest replied, that this Ogvald was a king, and a very valiant man, and that he made great sacrifices to a cow which he had with him wherever he went, and con-

sidered it good for his health to drink her milk. This same King Ogvald had a battle with a king called Varin, in which battle Ogvald fell. He was buried under a mound close to the house; "and there stands his stone over him, and close to it his cow also is laid." Such and many other things, and ancient events, the king inquired after. Now, when the king had sat late into the night, the bishop reminded him that it was time to go to bed, and the king did so. But after the king was undressed, and had laid himself in bed, the guest sat upon the foot-stool before the bed, and still spoke long with the king; for after one tale was ended, he still wanted a new one. Then the bishop observed to the king, it was time to go to sleep, and the king did so; and the guest went out. Soon after the king awoke, asked for the guest, and ordered him to be called; but the guest was not to be found. The morning after, the king ordered his cook and cellar-master to be called, and asked if any strange person had been with them. They said, that as they were making ready the meat a man came to them, and observed that they were cooking very poor meat for the king's table; whereupon he gave them two thick and fat pieces of beef, which they boiled with the rest of the meat. Then the king ordered that all the meat should be thrown away, and said this man can be no other than the Odin whom the heathens have so long worshipped; and added, "but Odin shall not deceive us."

72.—THE THING IN THRONDHJEM.

King Olaf collected a great army in the east of the

country towards summer, and sailed with it north to Nidaros in the Throndhjem country. From thence he sent a message-token over all the fjord, calling the people of eight different districts to a Thing; but the bondes changed the Thing-token into a war-token; and called together all men, free and unfree, in all the Throndhjem land. Now when the king met the Thing, the whole people came fully armed. After the Thing was seated, the king spoke, and invited them to adopt Christianity; but he had only spoken a short time when the bondes called out to him to be silent, or they would attack him and drive him away. "We did so," said they, "with Hakon foster-son of Athelstan, when he brought us the same message, and we held him in quite as much respect as we hold thee." When King Olaf saw how incensed the bondes were, and that they had such a war force that he could make no resistance, he turned his speech as if he would give way to the bondes, and said, "I wish only to be in a good understanding with you as of old; and I will come to where ye hold your greatest sacrifice-festival, and see your customs, and thereafter we shall consider which to hold by." And in this all agreed; and as the king spoke mildly and friendly with the bondes, their anger was appeased, and their conference with the king went off peacefully. At the close of it a midsummer sacrifice was fixed to take place in Mæren, and all chiefs and great bondes to attend it as usual. The king was to be at it.

73.—JARNSKEGGE OR IRON BEARD.

There was a great bonde called Skegge, and sometimes

Jarnskegge, or Iron Beard, who dwelt in Uphaug in Yrjar. He spoke first at the Thing to Olaf; and was the foremost man of the bondes in speaking against Christianity. The Thing was concluded in this way for that time,—the bondes returned home, and the king went to Hlader.

74.—THE FEAST AT HLADER.

King Olaf lay with his ships in the river Nid, and had thirty vessels, which were manned with many brave people; but the king himself was often at Hlader, with his court attendants. As the time now was approaching at which the sacrifices should be made at Mæren, the king prepared a great feast at Hlader, and sent a message to the districts of Strind, Gaulardal, and out to Orkadal, to invite the chiefs and other great bondes. When the feast was ready, and the chiefs assembled, there was a handsome entertainment the first evening, at which plenty of liquor went round, and the guests were made very drunk. The night after they all slept in peace. The following morning, when the king was dressed, he had the early mass sung before him; and when the mass was over, ordered to sound the trumpets for a House Thing: upon which all his men left the ships to come up to the Thing. When the Thing was seated, the king stood up, and spoke thus:—"We held a Thing at Frosta, and there I invited the bondes to allow themselves to be baptized; but they, on the other hand, invited me to offer sacrifice to their gods, as King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, had done; and thereafter it was agreed upon between us t[illegible] should meet at Mærin, and there make a great

Now if I, along with you, shall turn again to making sacrifice, then will I make the greatest of sacrifices that are in use; and I will sacrifice men. But I will not select slaves or malefactors for this, but will take the greatest men only to be offered to the gods; and for this I select Orm Lygra of Medalhus, Styrkar of Gimsar, Kar of Gryting, Asbjorn Thorbergson of Varnes, Orm of Lyxa, Haldor of Skerdingsstedja;" and besides these he named five others of the principal men. All these, he said, he would offer in sacrifice to the gods for peace and a fruitful season; and ordered them to be laid hold of immediately. Now when the bondes saw that they were not strong enough to make head against the king, they asked for peace, and submitted wholly to the king's pleasure. So it was settled that all the bondes who had come there should be baptized, and should take an oath to the king to hold by the right faith, and to renounce sacrifice to the gods. The king then kept all these men as hostages who came to his feast, until they sent him their sons, brothers, or other near relations.

75.—OF THE THING IN THRONDHJEM.

King Olaf went in with all his forces into the Throndhjem country; and when he came to Mæren all among the chiefs of the Throndhjem people who were most opposed to Christianity were assembled, and had with them all the great bondes who had before made sacrifice at that place. There was thus a greater multitude of bondes than there had been at the Frosta-Thing. Now the king let the people be summoned to the Thing, where both parties

met armed; and when the Thing was seated the king made a speech, in which he told the people to go over to Christianity. Jarnskegge replies on the part of the bondes, and says that the will of the bondes is now, as formerly, that the king should not break their laws. "We want, king," said he, "that thou shouldst offer sacrifice, as other kings before thee have done." All the bondes applauded his speech with a loud shout, and said they would have all things according to what Skegge said. Then the king said he would go into the temple of their gods with them, and see what the practices were when they sacrificed. The bondes thought well of this proceeding, and both parties went to the temple.

76.—THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE BAPTIZED.

Now King Olaf entered into the temple with some few of his men and a few bondes; and when the king came to where their gods were, Thor, as the most considered among their gods, sat there adorned with gold and silver. The king lifted up his gold-inlaid axe which he carried in his hands, and struck Thor so that the image rolled down from its seat. Then the king's men turned to and threw down all the gods from their seats; and while the king was in the temple, Jarnskegge was killed outside of the temple doors, and the king's men did it. When the king came forth out of the temple he offered the bondes two conditions,—that all should accept of Christianity forthwith, or that they should fight with him. But as Skegge was killed, there was no leader in the bondes' army to raise the banner against King Olaf; so they took

the other condition, to surrender to the king's will and obey his order. Then King Olaf had all the people present baptized, and took hostages from them for their remaining true to Christianity; and he sent his men round to every district, and no man in the Throndhjem country opposed Christianity, but all people took baptism.

77.—A TOWN IN THE THRONDHJEM COUNTRY.

King Olaf with his people went out to Nidaros, and made houses on the flat side of the river Nid, which he raised to be a merchant town, and gave people ground to build houses upon. The king's house he had built just opposite Skipakrok; and he transported thither, in harvest, all that was necessary for his winter residence, and had many people about him there.

78.—KING OLAF'S MARRIAGE.

King Olaf appointed a meeting with the relations of Jarnskegge, and offered them the compensation or penalty for his bloodshed; for there were many bold men who had an interest in that business. Jarnskegge had a daughter called Gudrun; and at last it was agreed upon between the parties that the king should take her in marriage. When the wedding-day came King Olaf and Gudrun went to bed together. As soon as Gudrun, the first night they lay together, thought the king was asleep, she drew a knife, with which she intended to run him through; but the king saw it, took the knife from her, got out of bed, and went to his men, and told them what had happened. Gudrun also took her clothes, and went away

along with all her men who had followed her thither. Gudrun never came into the king's bed again.

79.—BUILDING OF THE SHIP CRANE.

The same autumn (998) King Olaf laid the keel of a great long-ship out on the strand at the river Nid. It was a snekkja; and he employed many carpenters upon her, so that early in winter the vessel was ready. It had thirty benches for rowers, was high in stem and stern, but was not broad. The king called this ship Tranen (the Crane). After Jarnskegge's death his body was carried to Yrjar, and lies there in the Skegge mound on Austrat.

80.—THANGBRAND THE PRIEST GOES TO ICELAND.

When King Olaf Trygvason had been two years king of Norway (997), there was a Saxon priest in his house who was called Thangbrand, a passionate, ungovernable man, and a great man-slayer; but he was a good scholar, and a clever man. The king would not have him in his house upon account of his misdeeds; but gave him the errand to go to Iceland, and bring that land to the Christian faith. The king gave him a merchant vessel; and, as far as we know of this voyage of his, he landed first in Iceland at Austfiord in the southern Alptfiord, and passed the winter in the house of Hal of Sida. Thangbrand proclaimed Christianity in Iceland, and on his persuasion Hal and all his house people, and many other chiefs, allowed themselves to be baptized; but there were many more who spoke against it. Thorvald Veile

and Veterlide the skald composed a satire about Thangbrand; but he killed them both outright. Thangbrand was two years in Iceland, and was the death of three men before he left it.

81.—OF SIGURD AND HAUK.

There was a man called Sigurd, and another called Hauk, both of Halogaland, who often made merchant voyages. One summer (998) they had made a voyage westward to England; and when they came back to Norway they sailed northwards along the coast, and at North More they met King Olaf's people. When it was told the king that some Halogaland people were come who were heathen, he ordered the steersmen to be brought to him, and he asked them if they would consent to be baptized; to which they replied, no. The king spoke with them in many ways, but to no purpose. He then threatened them with death and torture; but they would not allow themselves to be moved. He then had them laid in irons, and kept them in chains in his house for some time, and often conversed with them, but in vain. At last one night they disappeared, without any man being able to conjecture how they got away. But about harvest they came north to Harek of Thjotta, who received them kindly, and with whom they stopped all winter (999), and were hospitably entertained.

82.—OF HAREK OF THJOTTA.

It happened one good-weather day in spring (999) that Harek was at home in his house with only few

people, and time hung heavy on his hands. Sigurd asked him if he would row a little for amusement. Harek was willing; and they went to the shore, and drew down a six-oared skiff; and Sigurd took the mast and rigging belonging to the boat out of the boat-house, for they often used to sail when they went for amusement on the water. Harek went out into the boat to hang the rudder. The brothers Sigurd and Hauk, who were very strong men, were fully armed, as they were used to go about at home among the peasants. Before they went out to the boat they threw into her some butter-kits and a bread-chest, and carried between them a great keg of ale. When they had rowed a short way from the island the brothers hoisted the sail, while Harek was seated at the helm; and they sailed away from the island. Then the two brothers went aft to where Harek the bonde was sitting; and Sigurd says to him, "Now thou must choose one of these conditions,—first, that we brothers direct this voyage; or, if not, that we bind thee fast and take the command; or, third, that we kill thee." Harek saw how matters stood with him. As a single man, he was not better than one of those brothers, even if he had been as well armed; so it appeared to him wisest to let them determine the course to steer, and bound himslf by oath to abide by this condition. On this Sigurd took the helm, and steered south along the land, the brothers taking particular care that they did not encounter people. The wind was very favourable; and they held on sailing along until they came south to Throndhjem and to Nidaros, where they found the king. Then the king called Harek to him, and

in a conference desired him to be baptized. Harek made objections; and although the king and Harek talked over it many times, sometimes in the presence of other people, and sometimes alone, they could not agree upon it. At last the king says to Harek, "Now thou mayst return home, and I will do thee no injury; partly because we are related together, and partly that thou mayst not have it to say that I caught thee by a trick: but know for certain that I intend to come north next summer to visit you Halogalanders, and ye shall then see if I am not able to punish those who reject Christianity." Harek was well pleased to get away as fast as he could. King Olaf gave Harek a good boat of ten or twelve pair of oars, and let it be fitted out with the best of everything needful; and besides he gave Harek thirty men, all lads of mettle, and well appointed.

83.—EYVIND KINRIFA'S DEATH.

Harek of Thjotta went away from the town as fast as he could; but Hauk and Sigurd remained in the king's house, and both took baptism. Harek pursued his voyage until he came to Thjotta. He sent immediately a message to his friend Eyvind Kinrifa, with the word that he had been with King Olaf; but would not let himself be cowed down to accept Christianity. The message at the same time informed him that King Olaf intended coming to the north in summer against them, and they must be at their posts to defend themselves; it also begged Eyvind to come and visit him, the sooner the better. When this message was delivered to Eyvind, he saw how very

necessary it was to devise some counsel to avoid falling into the king's hands. He set out, therefore, in a light vessel with a few hands as fast as he could. When he came to Thjotta he was received by Harek in the most friendly way, and they immediately entered into conversation with each other behind the house. When they had spoken together but a short time, King Olaf's men, who had secretly followed Harek to the north, came up, and took Eyvind prisoner, and carried him away to their ship. They did not halt on their voyage until they came to Throndhjem, and presented themselves to King Olaf at Nidaros. Then Eyvind was brought up to a conference with the king, who asked him to allow himself to be baptized, like other people; but Eyvind decidedly answered he would not. The king still, with persuasive words, urged him to accept Christianity, and both he and the bishop used many suitable arguments; but Eyvind would not allow himself to be moved. The king offered him gifts and great fiefs, but Eyvind refused all. Then the king threatened him with tortures and death, but Eyvind was steadfast. Then the king ordered a pan of glowing coals to be placed upon Eyvind's belly, which burst asunder. Eyvind cried, "Take away the pan, and I will say something before I die," which also was done. The king said, "Wilt thou now, Eyvind, believe in Christ?" "No," said Eyvind, "I can take no baptism; for I am an evil spirit put into a man's body by the sorcery of Fins because in no other way could my father and mother have a child." With that died Eyvind, who had been one of the greatest sorcerers.

84.—HALOGALAND MADE CHRISTIAN.

The spring after (999) King Olaf fitted out and manned his ships, and commanded himself his ship the Crane. He had many and smart people with him; and when he was ready, he sailed northwards with his fleet past Bryda, and to Halogaland. Wheresoever he came to the land, or to the islands, he held a Thing, and told the people to accept the right faith, and to be baptized. No man dared to say anything against it, and the whole country he passed through was made Christian. King Olaf was a guest in the house of Harek of Thjotta, who was baptized with all his people. At parting the king gave Harek good presents; and he entered into the king's service, and got fiefs, and the privileges of lendsman from the king.

85.—THORER HJORT'S DEATH.

There was a bonde, by name Raud the Strong, who dwelt in Godey in Salten fjord. Raud was a very rich man, who had many house servants; and likewise was a powerful man, who had many Fins in his service when he wanted them. Raud was a great idolater, and very skillful in witchcraft, and was a great friend of Thorer Hjort, before spoken of. Both were great chiefs. Now when they heard that King Olaf was coming with a great force from the south to Halogaland, they gathered together an army, ordered out ships, and they too had a great force on foot. Raud had a large ship with a gilded head formed like a dragon, which ship had thirty rowing benches, and even for that kind of ship was very large.

Thorer Hjort had also a large ship. These men sailed southwards with their ships against King Olaf, and as soon as they met gave battle. A great battle there was, and a great fall of men; but principally on the side of the Halogalanders, whose ships were cleared of men, so that a great terror came upon them. Raud rode with his dragon out to sea, and set sail. Raud had always a fair wind wheresoever he wished to sail, which came from his arts of witchcraft; and, to make a short story, he came home to Godey. Thorer Hjort fled from the ships up to the land; but King Olaf landed people, followed those who fled, and killed them. Usually the king was the foremost in such skirmishes, and was so now. When the king saw where Thorer Hjort, who was quicker on foot than any man, was running to, he ran after him with his dog Vige. The king said, "Vige! Vige! catch the deer." Vige ran straight in upon him; on which Thorer halted, and the king threw a spear at him. Thorer struck with his sword at the dog, and gave him a great wound; but at the same moment the king's spear flew under Thorer's arm, and went through and through him, and came out at his other side. There Thorer left his life; but Vige was carried wounded to the ships.

86.—KING OLAF'S VOYAGE TO GODEY.

King Olaf gave life and freedom to all the men who asked it and agreed to become Christian. King Olaf sailed with his fleet northwards along the coast, and baptized all the people among whom he came; and when he came north to Salten fjord, he intended to sail into it

to look for Raud, but a dreadful tempest and storm was raging in the fjord. They lay there a whole week, in which the same weather was raging within the fjord, while without there was a fine brisk wind only, fair for proceeding north along the land. Then the king continued his voyage north to Omd, where all the people submitted to Christianity. Then the king turned about and sailed to the south again; but when he came to the north side of Salten fjord, the same tempest was blowing, and the sea ran high out from the fjord, and the same kind of storm prevailed for several days while the king was lying there. Then the king applied to Bishop Sigurd, and asked him if he knew any counsel about it; and the bishop said he would try if God would give him power to conquer these arts of the Devil.

87.—OF RAUD'S BEING TORTURED.

Bishop Sigurd took all his mass robes and went forward to the bow of the king's ship; ordered tapers to be lighted, and incense to be brought out. Then he set the crucifix upon the stem of the vessel, read the Evangelist and many prayers, besprinkled the whole ship with holy water, and then ordered the ship-tent to be stowed away, and to row into the fjord. The king ordered all the other ships to follow him. Now when all was ready on board the Crane to row, she went into the fjord without the rowers finding any wind; and the sea was curled about their keel track like as in a calm, so quiet and still was the water; yet on each side of them the waves were lashing up so high that they hid the sight of the mountains. And so the one ship followed the other in the smooth sea

track; and they proceeded this way the whole day and night, until they reached Godey. Now when they came to Raud's house his great ship, the dragon, was afloat close to the land. King Olaf went up to the house immediately with his people; made an attack on the loft in which Raud was sleeping, and broke it open. The men rushed in: Raud was taken and bound, and of the people with him some were killed and some made prisoners. Then the king's men went to a lodging in which Raud's house servants slept, and killed some, bound others, and beat others. Then the king ordered Raud to be brought before him, and offered him baptism. "And," says the king, "I will not take thy property from thee, but rather be thy friend, if thou wilt make thyself worthy to be so." Raud exclaimed with all his might against the proposal, saying he would never believe in Christ, and making his scoff of God. Then the king was wroth, and said Raud should die the worst of deaths. And the king ordered him to be bound to a beam of wood, with his face uppermost, and a round pin of wood to be set between his teeth to force his mouth open. Then the king ordered an adder to be stuck into the mouth of him; but the serpent would not go into his mouth, but shrunk back when Raud breathed against it. Now the king ordered a hollow branch of an angelica root to be stuck into Raud's mouth; others say the king put his horn into his mouth, and forced the serpent to go in by holding a red-hot iron before the opening. So the serpent crept into the mouth of Raud and down his throat, and gnawed its way out of his side; and thus Raud perished. King Olaf took here

much gold and silver, and other property of weapons, and many sorts of precious effects; and all the men who were with Raud he either had baptized, or if they refused had them killed or tortured. Then the king took the dragon-ship which Raud had owned, and steered it himself; for it was a much larger and handsomer vessel than the Crane. In front it had a dragon's head, and aft a crook, which turned up, and ended with the figure of the dragon's tail. The carved work on each side of the stem and stern was gilded. This ship the king called the Serpent. When the sails were hoisted they represented, as it were, the dragon's wings; and the ship was the handsomest in all Norway. The islands on which Raud dwelt were called Gylling and Hæring; but the whole islands together were called Godey Isles, and the current between the isles and the mainland the Godey Stream. King Olaf baptized the whole people of the fjord, and then sailed southwards along the land; and on this voyage happened much and various things, which are set down in tales and sagas,—namely, how witches and evil spirits tormented his men, and sometimes himself; but we will rather write about what occurred when King Olaf made Norway Christian, or in the other countries in which he advanced Christianity. The same autumn Olaf with his fleet returned to Throndhjem, and landed at Nidaros, where he took up his winter abode. What I am now going to write about concerns the Icelanders.

88.—OF THE ICELANDERS.

Kjartan Olafson, a son's son of Hoskuld, and a daugh-

ter's son of Egil Skallagrimson, came the same autumn (999) from Iceland to Nidaros, and he was considered to be the most agreeable and hopeful man of any born in Iceland. There was also Haldor, a son of Gudmund of Modruveller; and Kolbein, a son of Thord, Frey's gode, and a brother's son of Brennuflose; together with Sverting, a son of the gode Runolf. All these were heathens; and besides them there were many more,—some men of power, others common men of no property. There came also from Iceland considerable people, who, by Thangbrand's help, had been made Christians; namely, Gissur the white, a son of Teit Ketilbjornson; and his mother was Alof, daughter of herse Bodvar, who was the son of Vikingakare. Bodvar's brother was Sigurd, father of Eirik Bjodaskalle, whose daughter Astrid was King Olaf's mother. Hjalte Skeggjason was the name of another Iceland man, who was married to Vilborg, Gissur the White's daughter. Hjalte was also a Christian; and King Olaf was very friendly to his relations Gissur and Hjalte, who lived with him. But the Iceland men who directed the ships, and were heathens, tried to sail away as soon as the king came to the town of Nidaros, for they were told the king forced all men to become Christians; but the wind came stiff against them, and drove them back to Nidarholm. They who directed the ships were Thorarin Nefjulfson, the skald Halfred Ottarson, Brand the Generous, and Thorleik, Brand's son. It was told the king that there were Icelanders with ships there, and all were heathen, and wanted to fly from a meeting with the king. Then the king sent them a message forbidding

them to sail, and ordering them to bring their ships up to the town, which they did, but without discharging the cargoes. (They carried on their dealings and held a market at the king's pier. In spring they tried three times to slip away, but never succeeded; so they continued lying at the king's pier. It happened one fine day that many set out to swim for amusement, and among them was a man who distinguished himself above the others in all bodily exercises. Kjartan challenged Halfred Vandredaskald to try himself in swimming against this man, but he declined it. "Then will I make a trial," said Kjartan, casting off his clothes, and springing into the water. Then he set after the man, seizes hold of his foot, and dives with him under water. They come up again, and without speaking a word dive again, and are much longer under water than the first time. They come up again, and without saying a word dive a third time, until Kjartan thought it was time to come up again, which, however, he could in no way accomplish, which showed sufficiently the difference in their strength. They were under water so long that Kjartan was almost drowned. They then came up, and swam to land. This Northman asked what the Icelander's name was. Kjartan tells his name.

He says, "Thou art a good swimmer; but art thou expert also in other exercises?"

Kjartan replied, that such expertness was of no great value.

The Northman asks, "Why dost thou not inquire of me such things as I have asked thee about?"

Kjartan replies, "It is all one to me who thou art, or what thy name is."

"Then will I," says he, "tell thee: I am Olaf Trygvason."

He asked Kjartan much about Iceland, which he answered generally, and wanted to withdraw as hastily as he could; but the king said, "Here is a cloak which I will give thee, Kjartan." And Kjartan took the cloak with many thanks.)[1]

89.—BAPTISM OF THE ICELANDERS.

When Michaelmas came, the king had high mass sung with great splendour. The Icelanders went there, listening to the fine singing and the sound of the bells; and when they came back to their ships every man told his opinion of the Christian man's worship. Kjartan expressed his pleasure at it, but most of the others scoffed at it; and it went according to the proverb, "the king had many ears," for this was told to the king. He sent immediately that very day a message to Kjartan to come to him. Kjartan went to the king with some men, and the king received him kindly. Kjartan was a very stout and handsome man, and of ready and agreeable speech. After the king and Kjartan had conversed a little, the king asked him to adopt Christianity. Kjartan replies, that he would not say no to that, if he thereby obtained the king's friendship; and as the king promised him the fullest friendship, they were soon agreed. The next day Kjartan was baptized, together with his relation

[1]The part included in parenthesis is not found in the original text of Heimskringla, but taken from *Codex Frisianus*.



EARL HAKON MURDERED BY KARK.

(From a painting by A. C. Muller.)

THE dispute between Olaf Tryggvason and Earl Hakon for the throne of Norway led to many battles, in which the former was usually successful; the latter was finally put to rout and compelled to flee to a homestead at Rimul, where Thora concealed him, with a Thrall named Kark, in a hole dug under a hog-stye. Olaf pursued the fugitive and traced him to this place of refuge but was unable to find him. Standing above the place of concealment Olaf offered a great reward to anyone who would kill the earl, which promise being overheard by Kark, the treacherous thrall waited until his master fell into a sleep and seizing the opportunity struck a dagger into Hakon's throat and then cut off his head, which he afterwards carried to Olaf. Instead of rewarding the thrall for the deed, Olaf punished the treacherous act by ordering that the thrall be beheaded.

See page 181.

Bolle Thorlakson, and all their fellow-travelers. Kjartan and Bolle were the king's guests as long as they were in their white baptismal clothes, and the king had much kindness for them. Wherever they came they were looked upon as people of distinction.

90.—HALFRED VANDREDASKALD BAPTIZED.

As King Olaf one day was walking in the street some men met him, and he who went the foremost saluted the king. The king asked the man his name, and he called himself Halfred.

"Art thou the skald?" said the king.

"I can compose poetry," replied he.

"Wilt thou then adopt Christianity, and come into my service?" asked the king.

"If I am baptized," replies he, "it must be on one condition,—that thou thyself art my godfather; for no other will I have."

The king replies, "That I will do." And Halfred was baptized, the king holding him during the baptism.

Afterwards the king said, "Wilt thou enter into my service?"

Halfred replied, "I was formerly in Earl Hakon's court; but now I will neither enter into thine nor into any other service, unless thou promise me it shall never be my lot to be driven away from thee."

"It has been reported to me," said the king, "that thou are neither so prudent nor so obedient as to fulfil my commands."

"In that case," replied Halfred, "put me to death."

"Thou art a skald who composes difficulties," says the king. "But run my service, Halfred, thou shalt be favored."

Halfred says, "If I am to be named the composer of difficulties, what lost thou give me, king, on my name-day?"

The king gave him a sword without a scabbard, and said, "Now compose me a song upon this sword, and let the word sword be in every line of the strophe." Halfred sang thus —

[illegible] For this good sword a sheath to [illegible]
[illegible] I'm worth three swords when men [illegible]
[illegible] swords see.
[illegible] But for the sword-sheath now I [illegible]

Then the king gave him the scabbard, observing that the word sword was wanting in one line of his strophe. "But there instead are three swords in one of the lines," says Halfred. "That is true," replies the king.—Out of Halfred's lays we have taken the most of the true and ancient accounts that are here related about Olaf Trygvason.

II.—THANGBRAND RETURNS FROM ICELAND.

The same harvest [illegible] Thangbrand the priest came back from Iceland to King Olaf, and told the ill success of his journey; namely, that the Icelanders had made lampoons about him, and that some even sought to kill him, and there was little hope of that country ever being made Christian. King Olaf was so enraged at this, that he ordered all the Icelanders to be assembled by sound of horn, and was going to kill all who were in the town, but

Kjartan, Gissur, and Hjalte, with the other Icelanders who had become Christians, went to him, and said, "King, thou must not fall from thy word—that however much any man may irritate thee, thou wilt forgive him if he turn from heathenism and become Christian. All the Icelanders here are willing to be baptized; and through them we may find means to bring Christianity into Iceland: for there are many amongst them, sons of considerable people in Iceland, whose friends can advance the cause; but the priest Thangbrand proceeded there as he did here in the court, with violence and manslaughter, and such conduct the people there would not submit to." The king harkened to those remonstrances; and all the Iceland men who were there were baptized.

92.—OF KING OLAF'S FEATS.

King Olaf was more expert in all exercises than any man in Norway whose memory is preserved to us in sagas; and he was stronger and more agile than most men, and many stories are written down about it. One is, that he ascended the Smalsarhorn, and fixed his shield upon the very peak. Another is, that one of his followers had climbed up the peak after him, until he came to where he could neither get up nor down; but the king came to his help, climbed up to him, took him under his arm, and bore him to the flat ground. King Olaf could run across the oars outside of the vessel while his men were rowing the Serpent. He could play with three daggers, so that one was always in the air, and he took the one falling by the handle. He could walk all round

upon the ship's rails, could strike and cut equally well with both hands, and could cast two spears at once. King Olaf was a very merry frolicsome man; gay and social; was very violent in all respects; was very generous; was very finical in his dress, but in battle he exceeded all in bravery. He was distinguished for cruelty when he was enraged, and tortured many of his enemies. Some he burnt in fire; some he had torn in pieces by mad dogs; some he had mutilated, or cast down from high precipices. On this account his friends were attached to him warmly, and his enemies feared him greatly; and thus he made such a fortunate advance in his undertakings, for some obeyed his will out of the friendliest zeal, and others out of dread.

93.—BAPTISM OF LEIF EIRIKSON.

Leif, a son of Eirik the Red, who first settled in Greenland, came this summer (999) from Greenland to Norway; and as he met King Olaf he adopted Christianity, and passed the winter (1000) with the king.

94.—FALL OF KING GUDROD.

Gudrod, a son of Eirik Bloodaxe and Gunhild, had been ravaging in the western countries ever since he fled from Norway before the Earl Hakon. But the summer before mentioned (999), when King Olaf Trygvason had ruled four years over Norway, Gudrod came to the country, and had many ships of war with him. He had sailed from England; and when he thought himself near to the Norway coast, he steered south along the land, to the quarter where it was least likely King Olaf would be.

Gudrod sailed in this way south to Viken; and as soon as he came to the land he began to plunder, to subject the people to him, and to demand that they should accept of him as king. Now as the country people saw that a great army was come upon them, they desired peace and terms. They offered King Gudrod to send a Thing-message over all the country, and to accept of him at the Thing as king, rather than suffer from his army; but they desired delay until a fixed day, while the token of the Thing's assembling was going round through the land. The king demanded maintenance during the time this delay lasted. The bondes preferred entertaining the king as a guest, by turns, as long as he required it; and the king accepted of the proposal to go about with some of his men as a guest from place to place in the land, while others of his men remained to guard the ships. When King Olaf's relations, Hyrning and Thorgeir, heard of this, they gathered men, fitted out ships, and went northwards to Viken. They came in the night with their men to a place at which King Gudrod was living as a guest, and attacked him with fire and weapons; and there King Gudrod fell, and most of his followers. Of those who were with his ships some were killed, some slipped away and fled to great distances; and now were all the sons of Eirik and Gunhild dead.

95.—BUILDING OF THE SHIP LONG SERPENT.

The winter after, King Olaf came from Halogaland (1000), he had a great vessel built at Hladhamrar, which was larger than any ship in the country, and of which the beam-knees are still to be seen. The length of keel that

rested upon the grass was seventy-four ells. Thorberg Skafhog was the man's name who was the master-builder of the ship; but there were many others besides,—some to fell wood, some to shape it, some to make nails, some to carry timber; and all that was used was of the best. The ship was both long and broad and high-sided, and strongly timbered.

While they were planking the ship, it happened that Thorberg had to go home to his farm upon some urgent business; and as he remained there a long time, the ship was planked up on both sides when he came back. In the evening the king went out, and Thorberg with him, to see how the vessel looked, and everybody said that never was seen so large and so beautiful a ship of war. Then the king returned to the town. Early next morning the king returns again to the ship, and Thorberg with him. The carpenters were there before them, but all were standing idle with their arms across. The king asked, "what was the matter?" They said the ship was destroyed; for somebody had gone from stem to stern, and cut one deep notch after the other down the one side of the planking. When the king came nearer he saw it was so, and said, with an oath, "The man shall die who has thus destroyed the vessel out of envy, if he can be discovered, and I shall bestow a great reward on whoever finds him out."

"I can tell you, king," said Thorberg, "who has done this piece of work."

"I don't think," replies the king, "that any one is so likely to find it out as thou art."

Thorberg says, "I will tell you, king, who did it. I did it myself."

The king says, "Thou must restore it all to the same condition as before, or thy life shall pay for it."

Then Thorberg went and chipped the planks until the deep notches were all smoothed and made even with the rest; and the king and all present declared that the ship was much handsomer on the side of the hull which Thorberg had chipped, and bade him shape the other side in the same way, and gave him great thanks for the improvement. Afterwards Thorberg was the master-builder of the ship until she was entirely finished. The ship was a dragon, built after the one the king had captured in Halogaland; but this ship was far larger, and more carefully put together in all her parts. The king called this ship Serpent the Long, and the other Serpent the Short. The long Serpent had thirty-four benches for rowers. The head and the arched tail were both gilt, and the bulwarks were as high as in sea-going ships. This ship was the best and most costly ship ever made in Norway.

96.—EARL EIRIK, THE SON OF HAKON.

Earl Eirik, the son of Earl Hakon, and his brothers, with many other valiant men their relations, had left the country after Earl Hakon's fall. Earl Eirik went eastwards to Svithjod, to Olaf, the Swedish king, and he and his people were well received. King Olaf gave the earl peace and freedom in the land, and great fiefs; so that he could support himself and his men well. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this in the verses before given. Many people who fled from the country on account of King Olaf Trygvason came out of Norway to Earl Eirik; and the earl resolved to fit out ships and go a-cruising, in order to

get property for himself and his people. First he steered to Gotland, and lay there long in summer watching for merchant vessels sailing towards the land, or for vikings. Sometimes he landed and ravaged all round upon the sea-coasts. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"—

"Eirik, as we have lately heard,
Has waked the song of shield and sword,—
Has waked the slumbering storm of shields
Upon the vikings' water-fields:
From Gotland's lonely shore has gone
Far up the land, and battles won;
And o'er the sea his name is spread.
To friends a shield, to foes a dread."

Afterwards Earl Eirik sailed south to Vindland, and at Stauren found some viking ships, and gave them battle. Eirik gained the victory, and slew the vikings. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"

"Earl Eirik, he who stoutly wields
The battle-axe in storm of shields,
With his long ships surprised the foe
At Stauren, and their strength laid low.
Many a corpse floats round the shore;
The strand with dead is studded o'er;
The raven tears their sea-bleached skins—
The land thrives well when Eirik wins."

97.—EIRIK'S FORAY ON THE BALTIC COASTS.

Earl Eirik sailed back to Sweden in autumn, and staid there all winter (997); but in spring he fitted out his war force again, and sailed up the Baltic. When he came to Valdemar's dominions he began to plunder and kill the inhabitants, and burn the dwellings everywhere as he came along, and to lay waste the country. He came to Aldeigiuburg, and besieged it until he took the castle; and he killed many people, broke down and burned the castle, and then carried destruction all around far and wide in Gardarike. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"—

"The generous earl, brave and bold,
Who scatters his bright shining gold,
Eirik with fire-scattering hand,
Wasted the Russian monarch's land,—
With arrow-shower, and storm of war,
Wasted the land of Valdemar.
Aldeiga burns, and Eirik's might
Scours through all Russia by its light."

Earl Eirik was five years in all on this foray; and when he returned from Gardarike he ravaged all Adalsysla and Eysysla, and took there four viking ships from the Danes, and killed every man on board. So it is told in the "Banda-drapa:"—

"Among the isles flies round the word,
That Eirik's blood-devouring sword
Has flashed like fire in the Sound,
And wasted all the land around.
And Eirik too, the bold in fight,
Has broken down the robber-might
Of four great vikings, and has slain
All of the crew—nor spared one Dane.
In Gautland he has seized the town,
In Syssels harried up and down;
And all the people in dismay
Fled to the forests far away.
By land or sea, in field or wave,
What can withstand this earl brave?
All fly before his fiery hand—
God save the earl, and keep the land."

When Eirik had been a year in Sweden he went over to Denmark (996) to King Svein Tjuguskeg, the Danish king, and courted his daughter Gyda. The proposal was accepted, and Earl Eirik married Gyda; and a year after (997) they had a son, who was called Hakon. Earl Eirik was in the winter in Denmark, or sometimes in Sweden; but in summer he went a-cruising.

98.—KING SVEIN'S MARRIAGE.

The Danish king, Svein Tjuguskeg, was married to Gunhild, a daughter of Burizleif, king of the Vinds. But in the times we have just been speaking of it happened that Queen Gunhild fell sick and died. Soon after King Svein married Sigrid the Haughty, a daughter of Skoglartoste, and mother of the Swedish king Olaf; and by means of this relationship there was great friendship between the kings and Earl Eirik, Hakon's son.

99.—KING BURIZLEIF'S MARRIAGE.

Burizleif, the king of the Vinds, complained to his

relation Earl Sigvalde, that the agreement was broken which Sigvalde had made between King Svein and King Burizleif, by which Burizleif was to get in marriage Thyre, Harald's daughter, a sister of King Svein: but that marriage had not proceeded, for Thyre had given a positive no to the proposal to marry her to an old and heathen king. "Now," said King Burizleif to Earl Sigvalde, "I must have the promise fulfilled." And he told Earl Sigvalde to go to Denmark, and bring him Thyre as his queen. Earl Sigvalde loses no time, but goes to King Svein of Denmark; explains to him the case; and brings it so far by his persuasion, that the king delivered his sister Thyre into his hands. With her went some female attendants, and her foster-father, by name Ozur Agason, a man of great power, and some other people. In the agreement between the king and the earl, it was settled that Thyre should have in property the possessions which Queen Gunhild had enjoyed in Vindland, besides other great properties as bride-gifts. Thyre wept sorely, and went very unwillingly. When the earl came to Vindland, Burizleif held his wedding with Queen Thyre, and received her in marriage; but as long as she was among heathens she would neither eat nor drink with them, and this lasted for seven days.

100.—OLAF GETS THYRE IN MARRIAGE.

It happened one night that Queen Thyre and Ozur ran away in the dark, and into the woods, and, to be short in our story, came at last to Denmark. But here Thyre did not dare to remain, knowing that if her brother King

Svein heard of her, he would send her back directly to Vindland. She went on, therefore, secretly to Norway, and never stayed her journey until she fell in with King Olaf, by whom she was kindly received. Thyre related to the king her sorrows, and entreated his advice in her need, and protection in his kingdom. Thyre was a well-spoken woman, and the king had pleasure in her conversation. He saw she was a handsome woman, and it came into his mind that she would be a good match; so he turns the conversation that way, and asks if she will marry him. Now, as she saw that her situation was such that she could not help herself, and considered what a luck it was for her to marry so celebrated a man, she bade him to dispose himself of her hand and fate; and, after nearer conversation, King Olaf took Thyre in marriage. This wedding was held in harvest after the king returned from Halogaland (999), and King Olaf and Queen Thyre remained all winter (1000) at Nidaros.

The following spring Queen Thyre complained often to King Olaf, and wept bitterly over it, that she who had so great property in Vindland had no goods or possessions here in the country that were suitable for a queen; and sometimes she would entreat the king with fine words to get her property restored to her, and saying that King Burizleif was so great a friend of King Olaf that he would not deny King Olaf anything if they were to meet. But when King Olaf's friends heard of such speeches, they dissuaded him from any such expedition. It is related that the king one day early in spring was walking in the street, and met a man in the market with many, and, for

that early season, remarkably large angelica roots. The king took a great stalk of the angelica in his hand, and went home to Queen Thyre's lodging. Thyre sat in her room weeping as the king came in. The king said, "See here, queen, is a great angelica stalk, which I give thee." She threw it away, and said, "A greater present Harald Gormson gave to my mother; and he was not afraid to go out of the land and take his own. That was shown when he came here to Norway, and laid waste the greater part of the land, and seized on all the scat and revenues; and thou darest not go across the Danish dominions for this brother of mine, King Svein." As she spoke thus, King Olaf sprang up, and answered with a loud oath, "Never did I fear thy brother King Svein; and if we meet he shall give way before me!"

101.—OLAF'S LEVY FOR WAR.

Soon after the king convoked a Thing in the town, and proclaimed to all the public, that in summer he would go abroad upon an expedition out of the country, and would raise both ships and men from every district; and at the same time fixed how many ships he would have from the whole Throndhjem fjord. Then he sent his message-token south and north, both along the sea-coast and up in the interior of the country, to let an army be gathered. The king ordered the Long Serpent to be put into the water, along with all his other ships both small and great. He himself steered the Long Serpent. When the crews were taken out for the ships, they were so carefully selected that no man on board the Long Serpent was

older than sixty or younger than twenty years, and all were men distinguished for strength and courage. Those who were Olaf's body-guard were in particular chosen men, both of the natives and of foreigners, and the boldest and strongest.

102.—CREW ON BOARD OF THE LONG SERPENT.

Ulf the Red was the name of the man who bore King Olaf's banner, and was in the forecastle of the Long Serpent; and with him was Kolbjorn the marshal, Thorstein Uxafot, and Vikar of Tiundaland, a brother of Arnliot Gelline. By the bulkhead next the forecastle were Vak Raumason from Gaut River, Berse the Strong, An Skyte from Jamtaland, Thrand the Strong from Thelamork, and his brother Uthyrmer. Besides these were, of Halogaland men, Thrand Skjalge and Ogmund Sande, Hlodver Lange from Saltvik, and Harek Hvasse; together with these Throndhjem men—Ketil the High, Thorfin Eisle, Havard and his brothers from Orkadal. The following were in the fore-hold: Bjorn from Studla, Bork from the fjords, Thorgrim Thjodolfson from Hvin, Asbjorn and Orm, Thord from Njardarlog, Thorstein the White from Oprustadar, Arnor from More, Halstein and Hauk from the Fjord-district, Eyvind Snak, Bergthor Bestil, Halkel from Fialer, Olaf Dreng, Arnfin from Sogn, Sigurd Bild, Einar from Hordaland, and Fin, and Ketil from Rogaland, and Grjotgard the Brisk. The following were in the hold next the mast: Einar Tambaskelfer, who was not reckoned as fully experienced, being only eighteen years old; Thorstein Hlifarson, Thorolf,

Ivar Smetta, and Orm Skogarnef. Many other valiant men were in the Serpent, although we cannot tell all their names. In every half division of the hold were eight men, and each and all chosen men; and in the fore-hold were thirty men. It was a common saying among people, that the Long Serpent's crew was as distinguished for bravery, strength, and daring, among other men, as the Long Serpent was distinguished among other ships. Thorkel Nefja, the king's brother, commanded the Short Serpent; and Thorkel Dydril and Jostein, the king's mother's brothers, had the Crane; and both these ships were well manned. King Olaf had eleven large ships from Throndhjem, besides vessels with twenty rowers' benches, smaller vesels, and provision-vessels.

103.—ICELAND BAPTIZED.

When King Olaf had nearly rigged out his fleet in Nidaros, he appointed men over the Throndhjem country in all districts and communities. He also sent to Iceland Gissur the White and Hjalte Skeggjason, to proclaim Christianity there; and sent with them a priest called Thormod, along with several men in holy orders. But he retained with him, as hostages, four Icelanders whom he thought the most important; namely, Kjartan Olafson, Haldor Gudmundson, Kolbein Thordson, and Sverting Runolfson. Of Gissur and Hjalte's progress, it is related that they came to Iceland before the Althing, and went to the Thing; and in that Thing Christianity was introduced by law into Iceland, and in the course of the summer all the people were baptized (1000).

104.—GREENLAND BAPTIZED.

The same spring King Olaf also sent Leif Eirikson (1000) to Greenland to proclaim Christianity there, and Leif went there that summer. In the ocean he took up the crew of a ship which had been lost, and who were clinging to the wreck. He also found Vinland the Good; arrived about harvest in Greenland; and had with him for it a priest and other teachers, with whom he went to Brattahild to lodge with his father Eirik. People called him afterwards Leif the Lucky: but his father Eirik said that his luck and ill luck balanced each other; for if Leif had saved a wreck in the ocean, he had brought a hurtful person with him to Greenland, and that was the priest.

105.—RAGNVALD SENDS MESSENGERS TO OLAF.

(The winter after King Olaf had baptized Halogaland, he and Queen Thyre were in Nidaros; and the summer before Queen Thyre had brought King Olaf a boy-child, which was both stout and promising, and was called Harald, after its mother's father. The king and queen loved the infant exceedingly, and rejoiced in the hope that it would grow up and inherit after its father; but it lived barely a year after its birth, which both took much to heart. In that winter were many Icelanders and other clever men in King Olaf's house, as before related. His sister Ingebjorg, Trygve's daughter, King Olaf's sister, was also at the court at that time. She was beautiful in appearance, modest and frank with the people, had a steady manly judgment, and was beloved of all. She was very fond of the Icelanders who were there, but most of

Kjartan Olafson, for he had been longer than the others in the king's house; and he found it always amusing to converse with her, for she had both understanding and cleverness in talk. The king was always gay and full of mirth in his intercourse with the people; and often asked about the manners of the great men and chiefs in the neighbouring countries, when strangers from Denmark or Sweden came to see him. The summer before Halfred Vandredaskald had come from Gautland, where he had been with Earl Ragnvald, Ulf's son, who had lately come to the government of West Gautland. Ulf, Ragnvald's father, was a brother of Sigrid the Haughty; so that King Olaf the Swede and Earl Ragnvald were brother's and sister's children. Halfred told Olaf many things about the earl: he said he was an able chief, excellently fitted for governing, generous with money, brave and steady in friendship. Halfred said also that the earl desired much the friendship of King Olaf, and had spoken of making court to Ingebjorg, Trygve's daughter. The same winter came ambassadors from Gautland, and fell in with King Olaf in the north, in Nidaros, and brought the message which Halfred had spoken of,—that the earl desired to be King Olaf's entire friend, and wished to become his brother-in-law by obtaining his sister Ingebjorg in marriage. Therewith the ambassadors laid before the king sufficient tokens in proof that in reality they came from the earl on this errand. The king listened with approbation to their speech; but said that Ingebjorg must determine on his assent to the marriage. The king then talked to his sister about the matter, and asked her opinion

about it. She answered to this effect,—"I have been with you for some time, and you have shown brotherly care and tender respect for me ever since you came to the country. I will agree therefore to your proposal about my marriage, provided that you do not marry me to a heathen man." The king said it should be as she wished. The king then spoke to the ambassadors; and it was settled before they departed that in summer Earl Ragnvald should meet the king in the east parts of the country, to enter into the fullest friendship with each other, and when they met they would settle about the marriage. With this reply the earl's messengers went westward, and King Olaf remained all winter in Nidaros in great splendour, and with many people about him).

106.—OLAF SENDS EXPEDITION TO VINDLAND.

King Olaf proceeded in summer with his ships and men southwards along the land (and past Stad. With him were Queen Thyre and Ingebjorg, Trygve's daughter, the king's sister). Many of his friends also joined him, and other persons of consequence who had prepared themselves to travel with the king. The first man among these was his brother-in-law, Erling Skjalgson, who had with him a large ship of thirty benches of rowers, and which was in every respect well equipt. His brothers-in-law Hyrning and Thorgeir also joined him, each of whom for himself steered a large vessel; and many other powerful men besides followed him. (With all this war-force he sailed southwards along the land; but when he came south as far as Rogaland he stopped there, for

Erling Skjalgson had prepared for him a splendid feast at Sole. There Earl Ragnvald, Ulf's son, from Gautland, came to meet the king, and to settle the business which had been proposed in winter in the messages between them, namely, the marriage with Ingebjorg the king's sister. Olaf received him kindly; and when the matter came to be spoken of, the king said he would keep his word, and marry his sister Ingebjorg to him, provided he would accept the true faith, and make all his subjects he ruled over in his land be baptized. The earl agreed to this, and he and all his followers were baptized. Now was the feast enlarged that Erling had prepared, for the earl held his wedding there with Ingebjorg the king's sister. King Olaf had now married off all his sisters. The earl, with Ingebjorg, set out on his way home; and the king sent learned men with him to baptize the people in Gautland, and to teach them the right faith and morals. The king and the earl parted in the greatest friendship.)

107.—OLAF'S EXPEDITION TO VINDLAND.

(After his sister Ingebjorg's wedding, the king made ready in all haste to leave the country with his army, which was both great and made up of fine men.) When he left the land and sailed southwards he had sixty ships of war, with which he sailed past Denmark, and in through the Sound, and on to Vindland. He appointed a meeting with King Burizleif; and when the kings met, they spoke about the property which King Olaf demanded, and the conference went off peaceably, as a good account was given of the properties which King Olaf thought

himself entitled to there. He passed here much of the summer, and found many of his old friends.

108.—CONSPIRACY AGAINST KING OLAF.

The Danish king, Svein Tjuguskeg, was married, as before related, to Sigrid the Haughty. Sigrid was King Olaf Trygvason's greatest enemy; the cause of which, as before said, was that King Olaf had broken off with her, and had struck her in the face. She urged King Svein much to give battle to King Olaf Trygvason; saying that he had reason enough, as Olaf had married his sister Thyre without his leave, "and that your predecessors would not have submitted to." Such persuasions Sigrid had often in her mouth; and at last she brought it so far that Svein resolved firmly on doing so. Early in spring King Svein sent messengers eastward into Svithjod, to his son-in-law Olaf, the Swedish king, and to Earl Eirik; and informed them that King Olaf of Norway was levying men for an expedition, and intended in summer to go to Vindland. To this news the Danish king added an invitation to the Swedish king and Earl Eirik to meet King Svein with an army, so that all together they might make an attack on King Olaf Trygvason. The Swedish king and Earl Eirik were ready enough for this, and immediately assembled a great fleet and an army through all Svithjod, with which they sailed southwards to Denmark, and arrived there after King Olaf Trgyvason had sailed to the eastward. Haldor the Unchristian tells of this in his lay on Earl Eirik:—

"The king-subduer raised a host
Of warriors on the Swedish coast.
The brave went southwards to the fight,
Who love the sword-storm's gleaming light;
The brave, who fill the wild wolf's mouth,
Followed bold Eirik to the south;
The brave, who sport in blood—each one
With the bold earl to sea is gone."

The Swedish king and Earl Eirik sailed to meet the Danish king, and they had all, when together, an immense force.

109.—EARL SIGVALDE'S TREACHEROUS PLANS.

At the same time that King Svein sent a message to Svithjod for an army, he sent Earl Sigvalde to Vindland to spy out King Olaf Trygvason's proceedings, and to bring it about by cunning devices that King Svein and King Olaf should fall in with each other. So Sigvalde sets out to go to Vindland. First, he came to Jomsborg, and then he sought out King Olaf Trygvason. There was much friendship in their conversation, and the earl got himself into great favour with the king. Astrid, the Earl's wife, King Burizleif's daughter, was a great friend of King Olaf Trygvason, particularly on acount of the connection which had been between them when Olaf was married to her sister Geira. Earl Sigvalde was a prudent, ready-minded man; and as he had got a voice in King Olaf's council, he put him off much from sailing homewards, finding various reasons for delay. Olaf's people were in the highest degree dissatisfied with this; for the men were anxious to get home, and they lay ready to sail, waiting only for a wind. At last Earl Sigvalde got a secret message from Denmark that the Swedish king's army was arrived from the east, and that Earl Eirik's also was ready; and that all these chiefs had

resolved to sail eastwards to Vindland, and wait for King Olaf at an island which is called Svold. They also desired the earl to contrive matters so that they should meet King Olaf there.

110.—KING OLAF'S VOYAGE FROM VINDLAND.

There came first a flying report to Vindland that the Danish king, Svein, had fitted out an army; and it was soon whispered that he intended to attack King Olaf. But Earl Sigvalde says to King Olaf, "It never can be King Svein's intention to venture with the Danish force alone, to give battle to thee with such a powerful army; but if thou hast any suspicion that evil is on foot, I will follow thee with my force (at that time is was considered a great matter to have Jomsborg vikings with an army), and I will give thee eleven well-manned ships." The king accepted this offer; and as the light breeze of wind that came was favourable, he ordered the ships to get under weigh, and the war-horns to sound the departure. The sails were hoisted; and all the small vessels, sailing fastest, got out to sea before the others. The earl, who sailed nearest to the king's ship, called to those on board to tell the king to sail in his keel-track: "For I know where the water is deepest between the islands and in the sounds, and these large ships require the deepest." Then the earl sailed first with his eleven ships, and the king followed with his large ships, also eleven in number; but the whole of the rest of the fleet sailed out to sea. Now when Earl Sigvalde came sailng close under the island Svold, a skiff rowed out to inform the earl that the Danish

king's army was lying in the harbour before them. Then the earl ordered the sails of his vessels to be struck, and they rowed in under the island. Haldor the Unchristian says:—

"From out the south bold Trygve's son
With one-and-seventy ships came on,
To dye his sword in bloody fight,
Against the Danish foeman's might.
But the false earl the king betrayed;
And treacherous Sigvalde, it is said,
Deserted from King Olaf's fleet,
And basely fled, the Danes to meet."

It is said here that King Olaf and Earl Sigvalde had seventy sail of vessels and one more, when they sailed from the south.

111.—CONSULTATION OF THE KINGS.

The Danish King Svein, the Swedish King Olaf, and Earl Eirik, were there with all their forces (1000). The weather being fine and clear sunshine, all these chiefs, with a great suite, went out on the isle to see the vessels sailing out at sea, and many of them crowded together; and they saw among them one large and glancing ship. The two kings said, "That is a large and very beautiful vessel: that will be the Long Serpent."

Earl Eirik replied, "That is not the Long Serpent." And he was right; for it was the ship belonging to Eindride of Gimsar.

Soon after they saw another vessel coming sailing along much larger than the first; then says King Svein, "Olaf Trygvason must be afraid, for he does not venture to sail with the figure-head of the dragon upon his ship."

Says Earl Eirik, "That is not the king's ship yet; for I know that ship by the coloured stripes of cloth in her sail. That is Erling Skialgson's. Let him sail; for it is

the better for us that this ship is away from Olaf's fleet, so well equipt as she is."

Soon after they saw and knew Earl Sigvalde's ships, which turned in and laid themselves under the island. Then they saw three ships coming along under sail, and one of them very large. King Svein ordered his men to go to their ships, "for there comes the Long Serpent."

Earl Eirik says, "Many other great and stately vessels have they besides the Long Serpent. Let us wait a little."

Then said many, "Earl Eirik will not fight and avenge his father; and it is a great shame that it should be told that we lay here with so great a force, and allowed King Olaf to sail out to sea before our eyes."

But when they had spoken thus for a short time, they saw four ships coming sailing along, of which one had a large dragon-head richly gilt. Then King Svein stood up and said, "That dragon shall carry me this evening high, for I shall steer it."

Then said many, "The Long Serpent is indeed a wonderfully large and beautiful vessel, and it shows a great mind to have built such a ship."

Earl Eirik said so loud that several persons heard him, "If King Olaf had no other vessels but only that one, King Svein would never take it from him with the Danish force alone."

Thereafter all the people rushed on board their ships, took down the tents, and in all haste made ready for battle.

While the chiefs were speaking among themselves as above related, they saw three very large ships coming

sailing along, and at last after them a fourth, and that was the Long Serpent. Of the large ships which had gone before, and which they had taken for the Long Serpent, the first was the Crane; the one after that was the Short Serpent; and when they really saw the Long Serpent, all knew, and nobody had a word to say against it, that it must be Olaf Trygvason who was sailing in such a vessel; and they went to their ships to arm for the fight.

An agreement had been concluded among the chiefs, King Svein, King Olaf the Swede, and Earl Eirik, that they should divide Norway among them in three parts, in case they succeeded against Olaf Trygvason; but that he of the chiefs who should first board the Serpent should have her, and all the booty found in her, and each should have the ships he cleared for himself. Earl Eirik had a large ship of war which he used upon his viking expeditions; and there was an iron beard or comb above on both sides of the stem, and below it a thick iron plate as broad as the combs, which went down quite to the gunnel.

112.—OF KING OLAF'S PEOPLE.

When Earl Sigvalde with his vessels rowed in under the island, Thorkel Dydril of the Crane, and the other ship commanders who sailed with him, saw that he turned his ships towards the isle, and thereupon let fall the sails, and rowed after him, calling out, and asking why he sailed that way. The Earl answered, that he was waitng for King Olaf, as he feared there were enemies in the way. They lay upon their oars until Thorkel Nefia came up

with the Short Serpent and the three ships which followed him. When they told them the same they too struck sail, and let the ships drive, waiting for King Olaf. But when the king sailed in towards the isle, the whole enemies' fleet came rowing within them out to the Sound. When they saw this they begged the king to hold on his way, and not risk battle with so great a force. The king replied, high on the quarter-deck where he stood, "Strike the sails; never shall men of mine think of flight. I never fled from battle. Let God dispose of my life, but flight I shall never take." It was done as the king commanded. Halfred tells of it thus:—

"And far and wide the saying bold
Of the brave warrior shall be told.
The king, in many a fray well tried,
To his brave champions round him cried,
'My men shall never learn from me
From the dark weapon-cloud to flee.'
Nor were the brave words spoken then
Forgotten by his faithful men."

113.—OLAF'S SHIPS PREPARED FOR BATTLE.

King Olaf ordered the war-horns to sound for all his ships to close up to each other. The king's ship lay in the middle of the line, and on one side lay the Little Serpent, and on the other the Crane; and as they made fast the stems together, [1]the Long Serpent's stem and the short Serpent's were made fast together; but when the king saw it he called out to his men, and ordered them to lay the larger ship more in advance, so that its stern should not lie so far behind in the fleet.

Then says Ulf the Red, "If the Long Serpent is to lie

[1]The mode of fighting in sea battles appears, from this and many other descriptions, to have been for each party to bind together the stems and sterns of their own ships, forming them thus into a compact body as soon as the fleets came within fighting distance, or within spears' throw. They appear to have fought principally from the forecastles; and to have used grappling-irons for dragging a vessel out of the line, or within boarding distance.—L.

as much more ahead of the other ships as she is longer than them, we shall have hard work of it here on the forecastle."

The king replies, "I did not think I had a forecastle man afraid as well as red."

Says Ulf, "Defend thou the quarterdeck as I shall the forecastle."

The king had a bow in his hands, and laid an arrow on the string, and aimed at Ulf.

Ulf said, "Shoot another way, king, where it is more needful: my work is thy gain."

114.—OF KING OLAF.

King Olaf stood on the Serpent's quarterdeck, high over the others. He had a gilt shield, and a helmet inlaid with gold; over his armour he had a short red coat, and was easy to be distinguished from other men. When King Olaf saw that the scattered forces of the enemy gathered themselves together under the banners of their ships, he asked, "Who is the chief of the force right opposite to us?"

He was answered, that it was King Svein with the Danish army.

The king replies, "We are not afraid of these soft Danes, for there is no bravery in them; but who are the troops on the right of the Danes?"

He was answered, that it was King Olaf with the Swedish forces.

"Better it were," says King Olaf, "for these Swedes to be sitting at home killing their sacrifices, than to be ven-

turing under our weapons from the Long Serpent. But who owns the large ships on the larboard side of the Danes?"

"That is Earl Eirik Hakonson," say they.

The king replies, "He, methinks, has good reason for meeting us; and we may expect the sharpest conflict with these men, for they are Norsemen like ourselves."

115.—THE BATTLE BEGINS.

The kings now laid out their oars, and prepared to attack (1000). King Svein laid his ship against the Long Serpent. Outside of him Olaf the Swede laid himself, and set his ship's stem against the outermost ship of King Olaf's line; and on the other side lay Earl Eirik. Then a hard combat began. Earl Sigvalde held back with the oars on his ships, and did not join the fray. So says Skule Thorsteinson, who at that time was with Earl Eirik:—

"I followed Sigvalde in my youth,
And gallant Eirik; and in truth,
Tho' now I am grown stiff and old,
In the spear-song I once was bold.
Where arrows whistled on the shore
Of Svold fiord my shield I bore,
And stood amidst the loudest clash
When swords on shields made fearful crash."

And Halfred also sings thus: —

"In truth I think the gallant king,
'Midst such a foemen's gathering,
Would be the better of some score
Of his tight Throndhjem lads, or more;
For many a chief has run away,
And left our brave king in the fray,
Two great kings' power to withstand,
And one great earl's, with his small band.
The king who dares such mighty deed
A hero for his skald would need."

116.—FLIGHT OF SVEIN AND OLAF THE SWEDE.

This battle was one of the severest told of, and many were the people slain. The forecastle men of the Long Serpent, the Little Serpent, and the Crane, threw grap-

lings and stem chains into King Svein's ship, and used their weapons well against the people standing below them, for they cleared the decks of all the ships they could lay fast hold of; and King Svein, and all the men who escaped, fled to other vessels, and laid themselves out of bow-shot. It went with this force just as King Olaf Trygvason had foreseen. Then King Olaf the Swede laid himself in their place; but when he came near the great ships it went with him as with them, for he lost many men and some ships, and was obliged to get away. But Earl Eirik laid his ship side by side with the outermost of King Olaf's ships, thinned it of men, cut the cables, and let it drive. Then he laid alongside of the next, and fought until he had cleared it of men also. Now all the people who were in the smaller ships began to run into the larger, and the earl cut them loose as fast as he cleared them of men. The Danes and Swedes laid themselves now out of shooting distance all around Olaf's ship; but Earl Eirik lay always close alongside of the ships, and used his swords and battle-axes, and as fast as people fell in his vessel others, Danes and Swedes, came in their place. So says Haldor the Unchristian:—

"Sharp was the clang of shield and sword,
And shrill the song of spears on board,
And whistling arrows thickly flew
Against the Serpent's gallant crew.
And still fresh foemen, it is said,
Earl Eirik to her long side led;
Whole armies of his Danes and Swedes,
Wielding on high their blue sword-blades."

Then the fight became most severe, and many people fell. But at last it came to this, that all King Olaf Trygvason's ships were cleared of men except the Long Serpent, on board of which all who could still carry their arms

were gathered. Then Earl Eirik lay with his ship by the side of the Serpent, and the fight went on with battle-axe and sword. So says Haldor:—

"Hard pressed on every side by foes,
The Serpent reels beneath the blows;
Crash go the shields around the bow!
Breast-plates and breasts pierced thro' and thro'!
In the sword-storm the Holm beside,
The earl's ship lay alongside
The king's Long Serpent of the sea—
Fate gave the earl the victory."

117.—OF EARL EIRIK.

Earl Eirik was in the forehold of his ship, where a cover of shields[1] had been set up. In the fight, both hewing weapons, sword, and axe, and the thrust of spears had been used; and all that could be used as weapon for casting was cast. Some used bows, some threw spears with the hand. So many weapons were cast into the Serpent, and so thick flew spears and arrows, that the shields could scarcely receive them; for on all sides the Serpent was surrounded by war-ships. Then King Olaf's men became so mad with rage, that they ran on board of the enemies ships, to get at the people with stroke of sword and kill them; but many did not lay themselves so near the Serpent, in order to escape the close encounter with battle-axe or sword; and thus the most of Olaf's men went overboard and sank under their weapons, thinking they were fighting on plain ground. So says Halfred:—

"The daring lads shrink not from death,—
Overboard they leap, and sink beneath
The Serpent's keel: all armed they leap,
And down they sink five fathoms deep.
The foe was daunted at their cheers:
The king, who still the Serpent steers,
In such a strait—beset with foes—
Wanted but some more lads like those."

[1]Both in land and sea fights the commanders appear to have been protected from missile weapons,—stones, arrows, spears,—by a shieldburg; that is, by a party of men bearing shields surrounding them in such a way that the shields were a parapet, covering those within the circle. The Romans had a similar military arrangement of shields in sieges—the testudo.—L.

118.—OF EINAR TAMBARSKELVER.

Einar Tambarskelver, one of the sharpest of bow-shooters, stood by the mast, and shot with his bow. Einar shot an arrow at Earl Eirik, which hit the tiller-end just above the earl's head so hard that it entered the wood up to the arrow-shaft. The earl looked that way, and asked if they knew who had shot; and at the same moment another arrow flew between his hand and his side, and into the stuffing of the chief's stool, so that the barb stood far out on the other side. Then said the earl to a man called Fin,—but some say he was of Fin (Laplander) race, and was a superior archer,—"Shoot that tall man by the mast." Fin shot; and the arrow hit the middle of Einar's bow just at the moment that Einar was drawing it, and the bow was split in two parts.

"What is that," cried King Olaf, "that broke with such a noise?"

"Norway, king, from thy hands," cried Einar.

"No! not quite so much as that," says the king; "take my bow, and shoot," flinging the bow to him.

Einar took the bow, and drew it over the head of the arrow. "Too weak, too weak," said he, "for the bow of a mighty king!" and, throwing the bow aside, he took sword and shield, and fought valiantly.

119.—OLAF GIVES HIS MEN SHARP SWORDS.

The king stood on the gangways of the Long Serpent, and shot the greater part of the day; sometimes with the bow, sometimes with the spear, and always throwing two spears at once. He looked down over the ship's sides,

and saw that his men struck briskly with their swords, and yet wounded but seldom. Then he called aloud, "Why do ye strike so gently that ye seldom cut?" One among the people answered, "The swords are blunt and full of notches." Then the king went down into the forehold, opened the chest under the throne, and took out many sharp swords, which he handed to his men; but as he stretched down his right hand with them, some observed that blood was running down under his steel glove, but no one knew where he was wounded.

120.—THE SERPENT BOARDED.

Desperate was the defence in the Serpent, and there was the heaviest destruction of men done by the forecastle crew, and those of the forehold, for in both places the men were chosen men, and the ship was highest; but in the middle of the ship the people were thinned. Now when Earl Eirik saw there were but few people remaining beside the ship's mast, he determined to board; and he entered the Serpent with four others. Then came Hyrning, the king's brother-in-law, and some others against him, and there was the most severe combat; and at last the earl was forced to leap back on board his own ship again, and some who had accompanied him were killed and others wounded. [illegible] Kolbeinson alludes to this:—

"On Odin's dec[illegible] wet with b[illegible]
The helm-ado[illegible] stood;
And gallant [illegible] our s[illegible]

[illegible] all round with sword deep
[illegible]
[illegible] mountain peaks shall fall,
[illegible] kept this in recall."

[illegible] and many men fell
[illegible] board of her began

to be thinned off, and the defence to be weaker. The earl resolved to board the Serpent again, and again he met with a warm reception. When the forecastle men of the Serpent saw what he was doing, they went aft and made a desperate fight; but so many men of the Serpent had fallen, that the ship's sides were in many places quite bare of defenders; and the earl's men poured in all around into the vessel, and all the men who were still able to defend the ship crowded aft to the king, and arrayed themselves for his defence. So says Haldor the Unchristian:—

"Eirik cheers on his men,—
'On to the charge again!'
The gallant few
Of Olaf's crew
Must refuge take
On the quarter-deck.
Around the king
They stand in ring;
Their shields enclose
The king from foes,
And the few who still remain
Fight madly, but in vain.
Eirik cheers on his men,—
'On to the charge again!'"

121.—THE SERPENT'S DECKS CLEARED.

Kolbjorn the marshal, who had on clothes and arms like the king's, and was a remarkably stout and handsome man, went up to the king on the quarter-deck. The battle was still going on fiercely even in the forehold.[1] But as many of the earl's men had now got into the Serpent as could find room, and his ships lay all round her, and few were the people left in the Serpent for defence against so great a force; and in a short time most of the Serpent's men fell, brave and stout though they were. King Olaf and Kolbjorn the marshal both sprang overboard, each on his own side of the ship; but the

[1]From the occasional descriptions of vessels in this and other battles, it may be inferred that even the Long Serpent, described in the 95th chapter as of 150 feet of keel was only decked fore and aft; the thirty-four benches for rowers occupying the open area in the middle, and probably gangways running along the sides for communicating from the quarter-deck to the forcastle.—L.

earl's men had laid out boats around the Serpent, and killed those who leaped overboard. Now when the king had sprung overboard, they tried to seize him with their hands, and bring him to Earl Eirik; but King Olaf threw his shield over his head, and sank beneath the waters. Kolbjorn held his shield behind him to protect himself from the spears cast at him from the ships which lay round the Serpent, and he fell so upon his shield that it came under him, so that he could not sink so quickly. He was thus taken and brought into a boat, and they supposed he was the king. He was brought before the earl; and when the earl saw it was Kolbjorn, and not the king, he gave him his life. At the same moment all of King Olaf's men who were in life sprang overboard from the Serpent; and Thorkel Nefia, the king's brother, was the last of all the men who sprang overboard. It is thus told concerning the king by Halfred:—

"The Serpent and the Crane
Lay wrecks upon the main.
On his sword he cast a glance,—
With it he saw no chance.
To his marshal, who of yore
Many a war-chance had come o'er,
He spoke a word—then drew in breath,
And sprang to his deep-sea death."

122.—REPORT AMONG THE PEOPLE.

Earl Sigvalde, as before related, came from Vindland, in company with King Olaf, with ten ships; but the eleventh ship was manned with the men of Astrid, the king's daughter, the wife of Earl Sigvalde. Now when King Olaf sprang overboard, the whole army raised a shout of victory; and then Earl Sigvalde and his men put their oars in the water and rowed towards the battle. Haldor the Unchristian tells of it thus:—

"Then first the Vindland vessels came
Into the fight with little fame;
The fight still lingered on the wave,
Tho' hope was gone with Olaf brave.
War, like a full-fed ravenous beast,
Still oped her grim jaws for the feast.
The few who stood now quickly fled,
When the shout told—'Olaf is dead!'"

But the Vindland cutter, in which Astrid's men were, rowed back to Vindland; and the report went immediately abroad and was told by many, that King Olaf had cast off his coat-of-mail under water, and had swum, diving under the long-ships, until he came to the Vindland cutter, and that Astrid's men had conveyed him to Vindland: and many tales have been made since about the adventures of Olaf the king. Halfred speaks thus about it:—

"Does Olaf live? or is he dead?
Has he the hungry ravens fed?
I scarcely know what I should say,
For many tell the tale each way.
This I can say, nor fear to lie,
That he was wounded grievously—
So wounded in this bloody strife,
He scarce could come away with life."

But however this may have been, King Olaf Trygvason never came back again to his kingdom of Norway. Halfred Vandredaskald speaks also thus about it:—

"The witness who reports this thing
Of Trygvason, our gallant king,
Once served the king, and truth should tell,
For Olaf hated lies like hell.
If Olaf 'scaped from this sword-thing,
Worse fate, I fear, befel our king
Than people guess, or e'er can know,
For he was hemm'd in by the foe.
From the far east some news is rife
Of king sore wounded saving life;
His death, too sure, leaves me no care
For cobweb rumours in the air.
It never was the will of fate
That Olaf from such perilous strait
Should 'scape with life! this truth may grieve—
'What people wish they soon believe.'"

123.—OF EARL EIRIK THE SON OF HAKON.

By this victory Earl Eirik Hakonson became owner of the Long Serpent, and made a great booty besides; and he steered the Serpent from the battle. So says Haldor:—

"Olaf, with glittering helmet crowned,
Had steered the Serpent through the Sound;
And people dressed their boats, and cheered,
As Olaf's fleet in splendour steered.
But the descendant of great Heming,
Whose race tells many a gallant sea-king,
His blue sword in red life-blood stained,
And bravely Olaf's long ship gained."

Svein, a son of Earl Hakon, and Earl Eirik's brother, was engaged at this time to marry Holmfrid, a daughter of King Olaf the Swedish king. Now when Svein the Danish king, Olaf the Swedish king, and Earl Eirik divided the kingdom of Norway between them, King Olaf got four districts in the Throndhjem country, and also the districts of More and Raumsdal; and in the east part of the land he got Ranrike, from the Gaut river to Svinasund. Olaf gave these dominions into Earl Svein's hands, on the same conditions as the sub-kings or earls had held them formerly from the upper-king of the country. Earl Eirik got four districts in the Throndhjem country, and Halogaland, Naumudal, the Fiord districts, Sogn, Hordaland, Rogaland, and North Agder, all the way to the Naze. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

"All chiefs within our land
On Eirik's side now stand:
Erling alone, I know,
Remains Earl Eirik's foe.
All praise our generous earl,—
He gives, and is no churl:
All men are well content
Fate such a chief has sent.
From Veiga to Agder they,
Well pleased, the earl obey;
And all will by him stand,
To guard the Norsemen's land.
And now the news is spread
That mighty Svein is dead,
And luck is gone from those
Who were the Norsemen's foes."

The Danish king Svein retained Viken as he had held it before, but he gave Raumarike and Hedemark to Earl Eirik. Svein Hakonson got the title of earl from Olaf the Swedish king. Svein was one of the handsomest men ever seen. The earls Eirik and Svein both allowed themselves to be baptized, and took up the true faith; but as long as they ruled in Norway they allowed every one to

do as he pleased in holding by his Christianity. But, on the other hand, they held fast by the old laws, and all the old rights and customs of the land, and were excellent men and good rulers. Earl Eirik had most to say of the two brothers in all matters of government.

SAGA OF OLAF HARALDSON.[1]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

OLAF HARALDSON the Saint's Saga is the longest, the most important, and the most finished of all the sagas in *Heimskringla*. The life of Olaf will be found treated more or less freely in *Agrip*, in *Historia Norvegiae*, in *Thjodrek the Monk*, in the legendary saga, and in *Fagrskinna*. Other old Norse literature relating to this epoch:

Are's Islendingabok. Landnama. Kristni Saga. Biskupa-sögur. Njala. Gunlaugs Saga Ormstungu. Bjarnar Saga Hitdælakappa. Hallfredar Thattr Vandrædaskalds. Eyrbyggia. Viga Styrs Saga. Laxdæla. Fostbrœdra. Gretla. Liosvetninga. Færeyinga. Orkneyinga.

Olaf Haraldson was born 995, went as a viking at the age of twelve, 1007; visited England, one summer and three winters, 1009-1012; in France two summers and one winter, 1012-1013; spent the winter in Normandy, 1014; returned to Norway and was recognised as King, April 3, 1015; fled from Norway the winter of 1028-1029; fell at Stiklestad, July 29 (or August 31), 1030

Skalds quoted in this saga are:—Ottar Svarte, Sigvat Skald, Thord Kolbeinson, Berse Torfason, Brynjolf, Arnor Jarlaskald, Thord Siarekson, Harek, Thorarin Loftunga, Halvard Hareksblese, Bjarne Gulbraskald, Jokul Bardson, Thormod Kolbrunarskald, Gissur, Thorfin Mun, Hofgardaref.

1.—OF SAINT OLAF'S BRINGING UP.

Olaf, Harald Grenske's son, was brought up by his stepfather Sigurd Syr and his mother Asta. Hrane the Far-travelled lived in the house of Asta, and fostered this Olaf Haraldson. Olaf came early to manhood, was handsome in countenance, middle-sized in growth, and was even when very young of good understanding and ready speech. Sigurd his stepfather was a careful house-

[1]King Olaf the Saint reigned from about the year 1015 to 1030. The death of King Olaf Trygvason was in the year 1000; and Earl Eirik held the government for the Danish and Swedish kings about fifteen years.—L.

holder, who kept his people closely to their work, and often went about himself to inspect his corn-rigs and meadow-land, the cattle, and also the smith-work, or whatsoever his people had on hand to do.

2.—OF OLAF AND KING SIGURD SYR.

It happened one day that King Sigurd wanted to ride from home, but there was nobody about the house; so he told his step-son Olaf to saddle his horse. Olaf went to the goats' pen, took out the he-goat that was the largest, led him forth, and put the king's saddle on him, and then went in and told King Sigurd he had saddled his riding horse. Now when King Sigurd came out and saw what Olaf had done, he said, "It is easy to see that thou wilt little regard my orders; and thy mother will think it right that I order thee to do nothing that is against thy own inclination. I see well enough that we are of different dispositions, and that thou art far more proud than I am." Olaf answered little, but went his way laughing.

3.—OF KING OLAF'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

When Olaf Haraldson grew up he was not tall, but middle-sized in height, although very thick, and of good strength. He had light brown hair, and a broad face, which was white and red. He had particularly fine eyes, which were beautiful and piercing, so that one was afraid to look him in the face when he was angry. Olaf was very expert in all bodily exercises, understood well to handle his bow, and was distinguished particularly in throwing his spear by hand: he was a great swimmer, and very handy, and very exact and knowing in all kinds

of smithwork, whether he himself or others made the thing. He was distinct and acute in conversation, and was soon perfect in understanding and strength. He was beloved by his friends and acquaintances, eager in his amusements, and one who always liked to be the first, as it was suitable he should be from his birth and dignity. He was called Olaf the Great.

4.—KING OLAF'S WAR EXPEDITION.

Olaf Haraldson was twelve years old when he, for the first time, went on board a ship of war (1007). His mother Asta got Hrane, who was called the foster-father of kings, to command a ship of war and take Olaf under his charge; for Hrane had often been on war expeditions. When Olaf in this way got a ship and men, the crew gave him the title of king; for it was the custom that those commanders of troops who were of kingly descent, on going out upon a viking cruise, received the title of king immediately, although they had no land or kingdom. Hrane sat at the helm; and some say that Olaf himself was but a common rower, although he was king of the men-at-arms. They steered east along the land, and came first to Denmark. So says Ottar Svarte, in his lay which he made about King Olaf:—

"Young was the king when from his home
He first began in ships to roam,
His ocean-steed to ride
To Denmark o'er the tide.

Well exercised art thou in truth—
In manhood's earnest work, brave youth!
Out from the distant north
Mighty hast thou come forth."

Towards autumn he sailed eastward to the Swedish dominions, and there harried and burnt all the country round; for he thought he had good cause of hostility

against the Swedes, as they killed his father Harald. Ottar Svarte says distinctly that he came from the east, out by way of Denmark:—

"Thy ship from shore to shore,
With many a well-plied oar,
Across the Baltic foam is dancing,—
Shields, and spears, and helms
glancing!
Hoist high the swelling sail
To catch the freshening gale!
There's food for the raven-flight
Where thy sail-winged ship shall
light:
Thy landing-tread
The people dread;
And the wolf howls for a feast
On the shore-side in the east."

5.—OLAF'S FIRST BATTLE.

The same autumn Olaf had his first battle at Sotasker, which lies in the Swedish skerry circle. He fought there with some vikings, whose leader was Sote. Olaf had much fewer men, but his ships were larger, and he had his ships between some blind rocks, which made it difficult for the vikings to get alongside; and Olaf's men threw grappling irons into the ships which came nearest, drew them up to their own vessels, and cleared them of men. The vikings took to flight after losing many men. Sigvat the skald tells of this fight in the lay in which he reckons up King Olaf's battles:—

"They launch his ship where waves
are foaming—
To the sea shore
Bore mast and oar,
And sent his o'er the seas a-roaming.
Where did the sea-king first draw
blood?
In the battle shock
At Sote's rock:
The wolves howl over their fresh
food."

6.—FORAY IN SVITHJOD.

King Olaf steered thereafter eastwards to Svithjod, and into the Lag (the Mælar lake), and ravaged the land on both sides. He sailed all the way up to Sigtuna, and laid his ships close to the old Sigtuna. The Swedes say the stone-heaps are still to be seen which Olaf had laid under

the ends of the gangways from the shore to the ships. When autumn was advanced, Olaf Haraldson heard that Olaf the Swedish king was assembling an army, and also that he had laid iron chains across Stoksund (the channel between the Mælar lake and the sea), and had laid troops there; for the Swedish king thought that Olaf Haraldson would be kept in there till frost came, and he thought little of Olaf's force, knowing he had but few people. Now when King Olaf Haraldson came to Stoksund he could not get through, as there was a castle west of the sound, and men-at-arms lay on the south; and he heard that the Swedish king was come there with a great army and many ships. He therefore dug a canal across the flat land Agnafit out to the sea. Over all Svithjod all the running waters fall into the Mælar lake; but the only outlet of it to the sea is so small that many rivers are wider, and when much rain or snow falls the water rushes in a great cataract out by Stoksund, and the lake rises high and floods the land. It fell heavy rain just at this time; and as the canal was dug out to the sea, the water and stream rushed into it. Then Olaf had all the rudders unshipped and hoisted all sail aloft. It was blowing a strong breeze astern, and they steered with their oars, and the ships came in a rush over all the shallows, and got into the sea without any damage. Now went the Swedes to their king, Olaf, and told him that Olaf the Great had slipped out to sea; on which the king was enraged against those who should have watched that Olaf did not get away. This passage has since been called King's Sound; but large vessels cannot pass

through it, unless the waters are very high. Some relate that the Swedes were aware that Olaf had cut across the tongue of land, and that the water was falling out that way; and they flocked to it with the intention to hinder Olaf from getting away, but the water undermined the banks on each side so that they fell in with the people, and many were drowned: but the Swedes contradict this as a false report, and deny the loss of people. The king sailed to Gotland in harvest, and prepared to plunder; but the Gotlanders assembled, and sent men to the king, offering him a scat. The king found this would suit him, and he received the scat, and remained there all winter. So says Ottar Svarte:—

"Thou seaman-prince! thy men are paid:
The scat on Gotlanders is laid;
Young man or old
To our seamen bold
Must pay, to save his head:
The Yngling princes fled,
Eysyssel people bled:
Who can't defend the wealth they have
Must die, or share with the rover brave."

7.—THE SECOND BATTLE.

It is related here that King Olaf, when spring set in, sailed east to Eysyssel, and landed and plundered; the Eysyssel men came down to the strand and gave him battle. King Olaf gained the victory, pursued those who fled, and laid waste the land with fire and sword. It is told that when King Olaf first came to Eysyssel they offered him scat, and when the scat was to be brought down to the strand the king came to meet it with an armed force, and that was not what the bondes there expected; for they had brought no scat, but only their weapons with which they fought against the king, as before related. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"With much deceit and bustle
To the heath of Eysyssel
The bondes brought the king,
To get scat at their weapon-thing.
But Olaf was too wise
To be taken by surprise:
Their legs scarce bore them off
O'er the common fast enough."

8.—THE THIRD BATTLE.

After this they sailed to Finland and plundered there, and went up the country. All the people fled to the forest, and they had emptied their houses of all household goods. The king went far up the country, and through some woods, and came to some dwellings in a valley called Herdaler,—where, however, they made but small booty, and saw no people; and as it was getting late in the day, the king turned back to his ships. Now when they came into the woods again people rushed upon them from all quarters, and made a severe attack. The king told his men to cover themselves with their shields, but before they got out of the woods he lost many people, and many were wounded; but at last, late in the evening, he got to the ships. The Finlanders conjured up in the night, by their witchcraft, a dreadful storm and bad weather on the sea; but the king ordered the anchors to be weighed and sail hoisted, and beat off all night to the outside of the land. The king's luck prevailed more than the Finlanders' witchcraft; for he had the luck to beat round the Balagard's-side in the night, and so got out to sea. But the Finnish army proceeded on land, making the same progress as the king made with his ships. So says Sigvat:—

"The third fight was at Herdaler, where
The men of Finland met in war
The hero of the royal race,
With ringing sword-blades face to face.
Off Balagard's shore the waves
Ran hollow; but the sea-king saves
His hard-pressed ship, and gains the lee
Of the east coast through the wild sea."

9.—THE FOURTH BATTLE IN SUDERVIK.

King Olaf sailed from thence to Denmark, where he met Thorkel the Tall, brother of Earl Sigvalde, and went into partnership with him; for he was just ready to set out on a cruise. They sailed southwards to the Jutland coast, to a place called Sudervik, where they overcame many viking ships. The vikings, who usually have many people to command, give themselves the title of kings, although they have no lands to rule over. King Olaf went into battle with them, and it was severe; but King Olaf gained the victory, and a great booty. So says Sigvat:—

"Hark! hark! The war-shout
Through Sudervik rings,
And the vikings bring out
To fight the two kings.

Great honour, I'm told,
Won these vikings so bold:
But their bold fight was vain,
For the two brave kings gain."

10.—THE FIFTH BATTLE IN FRIESLAND.

King Olaf sailed from thence south to Friesland, and lay under the strand of Kinlima in dreadful weather. The king landed with his men; but the people of the country rode down to the strand against them, and he fought them. So says Sigvat:—

"Under Kinlima's cliff,
This battle is the fifth.
The brave sea-rovers stand
All on the glittering sand;
And down the horsemen ride
To the edge of the rippling tide:
But Olaf taught the peasant band
To know the weight of a viking's hand."

11.—DEATH OF KING SVEIN FORKED BEARD.

The king sailed from thence westward to England. It was then the case that the Danish king, Svein Forked Beard, was at that time in England with a Danish army, and had been fixed there for some time, and had seized

upon King Ethelred's kingdom. The Danes had spread themselves so widely over England, that it was come so far that King Ethelred had departed from the country, and had gone south to Valland. The same autumn that King Olaf came to England, it happened that King Svein died suddenly in the night in his bed; and it is said by Englishmen that Edmund the Saint killed him, in the same way that the holy Mercurius had killed the apostate Julian. When Ethelred, the king of the English, heard this in Flanders, he returned directly to England; and no sooner was he come back, than he sent an invitation to all the men who would enter into his pay, to join him in recovering the country. Then many people flocked to him; and among others, came King Olaf with a great troop of Northmen to his aid. They steered first to London, and sailed into the Thames with their fleet; but the Danes had a castle within. On the other side of the river is a great trading place, which is called Sudvirke. There the Danes had raised a great work, dug large ditches, and within had built a bulwark of stone, timber, and turf, where they had stationed a strong army. King Ethelred ordered a great assault; but the Danes defended themselves bravely, and King Ethelred could make nothing of it. Between the castle and Southwark (Sudvirke) there was a bridge, so broad that two waggons could pass each other upon it. On the bridge were raised barricades, both towers and wooden parapets, in the direction of the river, which were nearly breast high; and under the bridge were piles driven into the bottom of the river. Now when the attack was made

the troops stood on the bridge everywhere, and defended themselves. King Ethelred was very anxious to get possession of the bridge, and he called together all the chiefs to consult how they should get the bridge broken down. Then said King Olaf he would attempt to lay his fleet alongside of it, if the other ships would do the same. It was then determined in this council that they should lay their war forces under the bridge; and each made himself ready with ships and men.

12.—THE SIXTH BATTLE.

King Olaf ordered great platforms of floating wood to be tied together with hazel bands, and for this he took down old houses; and with these, as a roof, he covered over his ships so widely, that it reached over the ships' sides. Under this screen he set pillars so high and stout, that there both was room for swinging their swords, and the roofs were strong enough to withstand the stones cast down upon them. Now when the fleet and men were ready, they rode up along the river; but when they came near the bridge, there were cast down upon them so many stones and missile weapons, such as arrows and spears, that neither helmet nor shield could hold out against it; and the ships themselves were so greatly damaged, that many retreated out of it. But King Olaf, and the Northmen's fleet with him, rowed quite up under the bridge, laid their cables around the piles which supported it, and then rowed off with all the ships as hard as they could down the stream. The piles were thus shaken in the bottom, and were loosened under the bridge. Now as the

armed troops stood thick of men upon the bridge, and there were likewise many heaps of stones and other weapons upon it, and the piles under it being loosened and broken, the bridge gave way; and a great part of the men upon it fell into the river, and all the others fled, some into the castle, some into Southwark. Thereafter Southwark was stormed and taken. Now when the people in the castle saw that the river Thames was mastered, and that they could not hinder the passage of ships up into the country, they became afraid, surrendered the tower, and took Ethelred to be their king. So says Ottar Svarte:—

"London Bridge is broken down,—
Gold is won, and bright renown.
Shields resounding,
War-horns sounding,
Hild is shouting in the din!
Arrows singing,
Mail-coats ringing—
Odin makes our Olaf win!"

And he also composed these:—

"King Ethelred has found a friend:
Brave Olaf will his throne defend—
In bloody fight
Maintain his right,
Win back his land
With blood-red hand,
And Edmund's son upon his throne replace—
Edmund, the star of every royal race!"

Sigvat also relates as follows:—

"At London Bridge stout Olaf gave
Odin's law to his war-men brave—
'To win or die!'
And their foemen fly.
Some by the dyke-side refuge gain—
Some in their tents on Southwark plain!
This sixth attack
Brought victory back."

13.—THE SEVENTH BATTLE.

King Olaf passed all the winter with King Ethelred, and had a great battle at Hringmara Heath in Ulfkel's land, the domain which Ulfkel Snilling at that time held; and here again the king was victorious. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"To Ulfkel's land came Olaf bold,
A seventh sword-thing he would hold.
The race of Ella filled the plain—
Few of them slept at home again!
Hringmara heath
Was a bed of death:
Harfager's heir
Dealt slaughter there."

And Ottar sings of this battle thus:—

"From Hringmara field
The chime of war,
Sword striking shield,
Rings from afar.
The living fly;
The dead piled high
The moor enrich:
Red runs the ditch."

The country far around was then brought in subjection to King Ethelred; but the Thingmen[1] and the Danes held many castles, besides a great part of the country.

14.—EIGHTH AND NINTH BATTLES OF OLAF.

King Olaf was commander of all the forces when they went against Canterbury; and they fought there until they took the town, killing many people and burning the castle. So says Ottar Svarte:—

"All in the grey of morn
Broad Canterbury's forced.
Black smoke from house-roofs borne
Hides fire that does its worst;
And many a man laid low
By the battle-axe's blow,
Waked by the Norsemen's cries,
Scarce had time to rub his eyes."

Sigvat reckons this King Olaf's eighth battle:—

"Of this eighth battle I can tell
How it was fought, and what befell.
The castle tower
With all his power
He could not take,
Nor would forsake.
The Perthmen fought,
Nor quarter sought;
By death or flight
They left the fight.
Olaf could not this earl stout
From Canterbury quite drive out."

At this time King Olaf was entrusted with the whole land defence of England, and he sailed round the land with his ships of war. He laid his ships at land at Nyjamoda, where the troops of the Thingmen were, and

[1]Thing-men were hired men-at-arms; called Thing-men probably from being men above the class of thralls or unfree men, and entitled to appear at Things, as being udal-born to land at home.

gave them battle and gained the victory. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"The youthful king stained red the hair
Of Angeln men, and dyed his spear
At Newport in their hearts' dark blood;
And where the Danes the thickest stood—
Where the shrill storm round Olaf's head
Of spear and arrow thickest fled,
There thickest lay the Thingmen dead!
Nine battles now of Olaf bold,
Battle by battle, I have told."

King Olaf then scoured all over the country, taking scat of the people, and plundering where it was refused. So says Ottar:—

"The English race could not resist thee,
With money thou madest them assist thee;
Unsparingly thou madest them pay
A scat to thee in every way;
Money, if money could be got—
Goods, cattle, household gear, if not.
Thy gathered spoil, borne to the strand,
Was the best wealth of English land."

Olaf remained here for three years (1010-1012).

15.—THE TENTH BATTLE.

The third year King Ethelred died, and his sons Edmund and Edward took the government (1012). Then Olaf sailed southwards out to sea, and had a battle at Hringsfjord, and took a castle situated at Holar, where vikings resorted, and burnt the castle. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"Of the tenth battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
Up on the hill in Hringsfjord fair
A robber nest hung in the air:
The people followed our brave chief,
And razed the tower of the viking thief.
Such rock and tower, such roosting-place,
Was ne'er since held by the roving race."

16.—ELEVENTH, TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH BATTLES.

Then King Olaf proceeded westwards to Grislupollar, and fought there with vikings at Williamsby; and there also King Olaf gained the victory. So says Sigvat:—

"The eleventh battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
At Grislupol our young fir's name
O'ertopped the forest trees in fame:
Brave Olaf's name—nought else was heard
But Olaf's name, and arm, and sword.
Of three great earls, I have heard say,
His sword crushed helm and head that day."

Next he fought westward on Fetlafjord, as Sigvat tells:—

"The twelfth fight was at Fetlafjord,
Where Olaf's honour-seeking sword
Gave the wild wolf's devouring teeth
A feast of warriors doomed to death."

From thence King Olaf sailed southwards to Seljupollar, where he had a battle. He took there a castle called Gunvaldsborg, which was very large and old. He also made prisoner the earl who ruled over the castle, and who was called Geirfin. After a conference with the men of the castle, he laid a scat upon the town and earl, as ransom, of twelve thousand gold shillings; which was also paid by those on whom it was imposed. So says Sigvat:—

"The thirteenth battle now I tell,
Where it was fought, and what befell.
In Seljupol was fought the fray,
And many did not survive the day.
The king went early to the shore,
To Gunvaldsborg's old castle-tower;
And a rich earl was taken there,
Whose name was Geirfin, I am sure."

17.—FOURTEENTH BATTLE AND OLAF'S DREAM.

Thereafter King Olaf steered with his fleet westward to Karlsar, and tarried there and had a fight. And while King Olaf was lying in Karlsa river waiting a wind, and intending to sail up to Norvasund, and then on to the land of Jerusalem, he dreamt a remarkable dream—that there came to him a great and important man, but of a terrible appearance withal, who spoke to him, and told him to give up his purpose of proceeding to that land. "Return back to thy udal, for thou shalt be king over

Norway for ever." He interpreted this dream to mean that he should be king over the country, and his posterity after him for a long time.

18.—FIFTEENTH BATTLE.

After this appearance to him he turned about, and came to Poitou, where he plundered and burnt a merchant town called Varrande. Of this Ottar speaks:—

"Our young king, blythe and gay,
Is foremost in the fray:
Poitou he plunders, Tuskland burns,—
He fights and wins where'er he turns."

And also Sigvat says:—

"The Norsemen's king is on his cruise,
His blue steel staining,
Rich booty gaining,
And all men trembling at the news.
The Norsemen's king is up the Loire:
Rich Parthenay
In ashes lay;
Far inland reached the Norsemen's spear."

19.—OF THE EARLS OF ROUEN.

King Olaf had been two summers and one winter in the west in Valland on this cruise; and thirteen years had now passed since the fall of King Olaf Trygvason. During this time earls had ruled over Norway; first Hakon's sons Eirik and Svein, and afterwards Eirik's sons Hakon and Svein. Hakon was a sister's son of King Canute, the son of Svein. During this time there were two earls in Valland, William and Robert; their father was Richard earl of Rouen. They ruled over Normandy. Their sister was Queen Emma, whom the English king Ethelred had married; and their sons were Edmund, Edward the Good, Edwy, and Edgar. Richard the earl of Rouen was a son of Richard the son of William Long Spear, who was the son of Rolf Ganger,

the earl who first conquered Normandy; and he again was a son of Ragnvald the Mighty, earl of More, as before related. From Rolf Ganger are descended the earls of Rouen, who have long reckoned themselves of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and hold them in such respect that they always were the greatest friends of the Northmen; and every Northman found a friendly country in Normandy, if he required it. To Normandy King Olaf came in autumn (1013), and remained all winter (1014) in the river Seine in good peace and quiet.

20.—OF EINAR TAMBASKELFER.

After Olaf Trygvason's fall, Earl Eirik gave peace to Einar Tambaskelfer, the son of Eindride Styrkarson; and Einar went north with the earl to Norway. It is said that Einar was the strongest man and the best archer that ever was in Norway. His shooting was sharp beyond all others; for with a blunt arrow he shot through a raw, soft ox-hide, hanging over a beam. He was better than any man at running on snow-shoes, was a great man at all exercises, was of high family, and rich. The earls Eirik and Svein married their sister Bergliot to Einar. Their son was named Eindride. The earls gave Einar great fiefs in Orkadal, so that he was one of the most powerful and able men in the Throndhjem country, and was also a great friend of the earls, and a great support and aid to them.

21.—OF ERLING SKIALGSON.

When Olaf Trygvason ruled over Norway, he gave

his brother-in-law Erling half of the land scat, and royal revenues between the Naze and Sogn. His other sister he married to the Earl Ragnvald Ulfson, who long ruled over West Gautland. Ragnvald's father, Ulf, was a brother of Sigrid the Haughty, the mother of Olaf the Swedish king. Earl Eirik was ill pleased that Erling Skialgson had so large a dominion, and he took to himself all the king's estates, which King Olaf had given to Erling. But Erling levied, as before, all the land scat in Rogaland; and thus the inhabitants had often to pay him the land scat, otherwise he laid waste their land. The earl made little of the business, for no bailiff of his could live there, and the earl could only come there in guest-quarters, when he had a great many people with him. So says Sigvat:—

"Olaf the king
Thought the bonde Erling
A man who would grace
His own royal race.

One sister the king
Gave the bonde Erling;
And one to an earl,
And she saved him in peril."

Earl Eirik did not venture to fight with Erling, because he had very powerful and very many friends, and was himself rich and popular, and kept always as many retainers about him as if he held a king's court. Erling was often out in summer on plundering expeditions, and procured for himself means of living; for he continued his usual way of high and splendid living, although now he had fewer and less convenient fiefs than in the time of his brother-in-law King Olaf Trygvason. Erling was one of the handsomest, largest, and strongest men; a better warrior than any other; and in all exercises he was like King Olaf himself. He was, besides, a man of un-

derstanding, jealous in everything he undertook, and a deadly man at arms. Sigvat talks thus of him:—

"No earl or baron, young or old,
Match with this bonde brave can hold.
Mild was brave Erling, all men say,
When not engaged in bloody fray;
His courage he kept hid until
The fight began, then foremost still
Erling was seen in war's wild game,
And famous still is Erling's name."

It was a common saying among the people, that Erling had been the most valiant who ever held lands under a king in Norway. Erling's and Astrid's children were these—Aslak, Skialg, Sigurd, Lodin, Thorer, and Ragnhild, who was married to Thorberg Arnason. Erling had always with him ninety free-born men or more; and both winter and summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure,[1] but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking. When the earl was in the neighbourhood he had 200[2] men or more. He never went to sea with less than a fully-manned ship of twenty benches of rowers. Erling had also a ship of thirty-two benches of rowers, which was besides, very large for that size, and which he used in viking cruises, or on an expedition; and in it there were 200 men at the very least.

22.—OF THE HERSE ERLING SKIALGSON.

Erling had always at home on his farm thirty slaves, besides other serving-people. He gave his slaves a certain day's work; but after it he gave them leisure, and leave that each should work in the twilight and at night for himself, and as he pleased. He gave them arable

[1]There were silver-studs in a row from the rim to the bottom of the drinking horn or cup; and as it went round each drank till the stud appeared above the liquor. This was drinking by measure.—L.

[2]240.

land to sow corn in, and let them apply their crops to their own use. He laid upon each a certain quantity of labour to work themselves free by doing it; and there were many who bought their freedom in this way in one year, or in the second year, and all who had any luck could make themselves free within three years. With this money he bought other slaves; and to some of his freed people he showed how to work in the herring-fishery, to others he showed some useful handicraft; and some cleared his outfields and set up houses. He helped all to prosperity.

23.—OF EARL EIRIK.

When Earl Eirik had ruled over Norway for twelve years, there came a message to him from his brother-in-law King Canute, the Danish king, that he should go with him on an expedition westward to England; for Eirik was very celebrated for his campaigns, as he had gained the victory in the two hardest engagements which had ever been fought in the north countries. The one was that in which the Earls Hakon and Eirik fought with the Jomsborg vikings; the other that in which Earl Eirik fought with King Olaf Trygvason. Thord Kolbeinson speaks of this:—

"A song of praise
Again I raise.
To the earl bold
The word is told,
That Knut the Brave
His aid would crave:
The earl, I knew,
To friend stands true."

The earl would not sleep upon the message of the king, but sailed immediately out of the country, leaving behind his son Earl Hakon to take care of Norway; and, as he

was but seventeen years of age, Einar Tambaskelfer was to be at his hand to rule the country for him.

Eirik met King Canute in England, and was with him when he took the castle of London. Earl Eirik had a battle also to the westward of the castle of London, and killed Ulfkel Snilling. So says Thord Kolbeinson:—

"West of London town we passed,
And our ocean-steeds made fast,
And a bloody fight begin,
England's lands to lose or win.
Blue sword and shining spear
Laid Ulfkel's dead corpse there.
Our Thingmen hear the war-shower sounding
Our grey arrows from their shields rebounding."

Earl Eirik was a winter in England, and had many battles there. The following autumn he intended to make a pilgrimage to Rome, but he died in England of a bloody flux.

24.—THE MURDER OF EDMUND.

King Canute came to England the summer that King Ethelred died, and had many battles with Ethelred's sons, in which the victory was sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Then King Canute took Queen Emma in marriage; and their children were Harald, Hardacanute, and Gunhild. King Canute then made an agreement with King Edmund, that each of them should have a half of England. In the same month Henry Strion murdered King Edmund. King Canute then drove all Ethelred's sons out of England. So says Sigvat:—

"Now all the sons of Ethelred
Were either fallen, or had fled:
Some slain by Canute,—some, they say,
To save their lives had run away."

25.—OLAF AND ETHELRED'S SONS.

King Ethelred's sons came to Rouen in Valland from England, to their mother's brother, the same summer that

King Olaf Haraldson came from the west from his viking cruise, and they were all during the winter in Normandy together. They made an agreement with each other that King Olaf should have Northumberland, if they could succeed in taking England from the Danes. Therefore about harvest, Olaf sent his foster-father Hrane to England to collect men-at-arms; and Ethelred's sons sent tokens to their friends and relations with him. King Olaf, besides, gave him much money with him to attract people to them. Hrane was all winter in England, and got promises from many powerful men of fidelity, as the people of the country would rather have native kings over them; but the Danish power had become so great in England, that all the people were brought under their dominion.

26.—BATTLE OF KING OLAF.

In spring (1014) King Olaf and King Ethelred's sons set out together to the west, and came to a place in England called Jungufurda, where they landed with their army and moved forward against the castle. Many men were there who had promised them their aid. They took the castle; and killed many people. Now when King Canute's men heard of this they assembled an army, and were soon in such force that Ethelred's sons could not stand against it; and they saw no other way left but to return to Rouen. Then King Olaf separated from them, and would not go back to Valland, but sailed northwards along England, all the way to Northumberland, where he put into a haven at a place called Valde; and in a

battle there with the townspeople and merchants he gained the victory, and a great booty.

27.—OLAF'S EXPEDITION TO NORWAY.

King Olaf left his long-ships there behind, but made ready two ships of burden; and had with him 220 men in them, well-armed, and chosen people. He sailed out to sea northwards in harvest, but encountered a tremendous storm, and they were in danger of being lost; but as they had a chosen crew, and the king's luck with them, all went on well. So says Ottar:—

"Olaf, great stem of kings, is brave-
Bold in the fight, bold on the wave.
No thought of fear
Thy heart comes near.
Undaunted, 'midst the roaring flood,
Firm at his post each shipman stood;
And thy two ships stout
The gale stood out."

And further he says:—

"Thou able chief! with they fearless crew
Thou meetest, with skill and courage true,
The wild sea's wrath
On thy ocean path.
Though waves mast-high were breaking round,
Thou findest the middle of Norway's ground,
With helm in hand
On Sæla's strand."

It is related here that King Olaf came from the sea to the very middle of Norway; and the isle is called Sæla where they landed, and is outside of Stad. King Olaf said he thought it must be a lucky day for them, since they had landed at Sæla in Norway; and observed it was a good omen that it so happened. As they were going up in the isle, the king slipped with one foot in a place where there was clay, but supported himself with the other foot. Then said he "The king falls." "Nay," replies Hrane, "thou didst not fall, king, but set fast foot in the soil." The king laughed thereat, and said, "It may be so if God

will." They went down again thereafter to their ships, and sailed to Ulfasund, where they heard that Earl Hakon was south in Sogn, and was expected north as soon as wind allowed with a single ship.

28.—HAKON TAKEN PRISONER BY OLAF.

King Olaf steered his ships within the ordinary ships' course when he came abreast of Fjaler district, and ran into Saudungssund. There he laid his two vessels one on each side of the sound, with a thick cable between them. At the same moment Hakon, Earl Eirik's son, came rowing into the sound with a manned ship; and as they thought these were but two merchant-vessels that were lying in the sound, they rowed between them. Then Olaf and his men draw the cable up right under Hakon's ship's keel, and wind it up with the capstan. As soon as the vessel's course was stopped her stern was lifted up, and her bow plunged down; so that the water came in at her fore-end and over both sides, and she upset. King Olaf's people took Earl Hakon and all his men whom they could get hold of out of the water, and made them prisoners; but some they killed with stones and other weapons, and some were drowned. So says Ottar:—

"The black ravens wade
In the blood from thy blade.
Young Hakon so gay,
With his ship, is thy prey:
His ship, with its gear,
Thou hast ta'en; and art here,
Thy forefathers' land
From the earl to demand."

Earl Hakon was led up to the king's ship. He was the handsomest man that could be seen. He had long hair, as fine as silk, bound about his head with a gold ornament.

When he sat down in the fore-hold, the king said to him, "It is not false what is said of your family, that ye are handsome people to look at; but now your luck has deserted you."

Hakon the earl replied, "It has always been the case that success is changeable; and there is no luck in the matter. It has gone with your family as with mine, to have by turns the better lot. I am little beyond childhood in years; and at any rate we could not have defended ourselves, as we did not expect any attack on the way. It may turn out better with us another time."

Then said King Olaf, "Dost thou not apprehend that thou art in that condition that, hereafter, there can be neither victory nor defeat for thee?"

The earl replies, "That is what thou only canst determine, king, according to thy pleasure."

Olaf says, "What wilt thou give me, earl, if for this time I let thee go, whole and unhurt?"

The earl asks what he would take.

"Nothing," says the king, "except that thou shalt leave the country, give up thy kingdom, and take an oath that thou shalt never go into battle against me."

The earl answered, that he would do so. And now Earl Hakon took the oath that he would never fight against Olaf, or seek to defend Norway against him, or attack him; and King Olaf thereupon gave him and all his men life and peace. The earl got back the ship which had brought him there, and he and his men rowed their way. Thus says Sigvat of him:—

"In old Saudungs sound
The king Earl Hakon found,
Who little thought that there
A foeman was so near.

The best and fairest youth
Earl Hakon was in truth,
That speaks the Danish tongue,
And of the race of great Hakon."

29.—HAKON'S DEPARTURE FROM NORWAY.

After this (1014) the earl made ready as fast as possible to leave the country and sail over to England. He met King Canute, his mother's brother, there, and told him all that had taken place between him and King Olaf. King Canute received him remarkably well, placed him in his court in his own house, and gave him great power in his kingdom. Earl Hakon dwelt a long time with King Canute. During the time Svein and Hakon ruled over Norway, a reconciliation with Erling Skialgson was effected, and secured by Aslak, Erling's son, marrying Gunhild, Earl Svein's daughter; and the father and son, Erling and Aslak, retained all the fiefs which King Olaf Trygvason had given to Erling. Thus Erling became a firm friend of the earl's, and their mutual friendship was confirmed by oath.

30.—ASTA RECEIVES HER SON OLAF.

King Olaf went now eastward along the land, holding Things with the bondes all over the country. Many went willingly with him; but some, who were Earl Svein's friends or relations, spoke against him. Therefore King Olaf sailed in all haste eastward to Viken; went in there with his ships; set them on the land; and proceeded up the country, in order to meet his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. When he came to Vestfold he was received in a friendly

way by many who had been his father's friends or acquaintances; and also there and in Folden were many of his family. In autumn (1014) he proceeded up the country to his stepfather King Sigurd's, and came there one day very early. As Olaf was coming near to the house, some of the servants ran beforehand to the house, and into the room. Olaf's mother, Asta, was sitting in the room, and around her some of her girls. When the servants told her of King Olaf's approach, and that he might soon be expected, Asta stood up directly, and ordered the men and girls to put everything in the best order. She ordered four girls to bring out all that belonged to the decoration of the room, and put it in order with hangings and benches. Two fellows brought straw for the floor, two brought forward four-cornered tables and the drinking-jugs, two bore out victuals and placed the meat on the table, two she sent away from the house to procure in the greatest haste all that was needed, and two carried in the ale; and all the other serving men and girls went outside of the house. Messengers went to seek King Sigurd wherever he might be, and brought to him his dress-clothes, and his horse with gilt saddle, and his bridle, which was gilt and set with precious stones. Four men she sent off to the four quarters of the country to invite all the great people to a feast, which she prepared as a rejoicing for her son's return. All who were before in the house she made to dress themselves with the best they had, and lent clothes to those who had none suitable.

31.—KING SIGURD'S DRESS.

King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him and brought him the news, and also told him all that Asta was doing at home in the house. He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it and put it in stack or barn; but the king, and two men with him, went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn. His dress, it is told, was this:—he had a blue kirtle and blue breeches; shoes which were laced about the legs; a grey cloak, and a grey wide-brimmed hat; a veil before his face; a staff in his hand with a gilt-silver head on it, and a silver ring around it. Of Sigurd's living and disposition it is related that he was a very gain-making man, who attended carefully to his cattle and husbandry, and managed his housekeeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp, and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway, and also excessively wealthy in movable property. Peaceful he was, and nowise haughty. His wife Asta was generous and high-minded. Their children were, Guthorm, the eldest; then Gunhild; the next Halfdan, Ingerid, and Harald. The messengers said to Sigurd, "Asta told us to bring thee word how much it lay at her heart that thou shouldst on this occasion comport thyself in the fashion of great men, and show a disposition more akin to Harald Harfager's race than to thy mother's father's, Hrane Thin-nose, or Earl Nereid the Old, although they too

were very wise men." The king replies, "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Asta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her; and I see she is still of the same disposition. She takes this up with great warmth; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendour she is leading him into it? If it is to proceed so, methinks they who mix themselves up in it regard little property or life. For this man, King Olaf, goes against a great superiority of power; and the wrath of the Danish and Swedish kings lies at the foot of his determination, if he ventures to go against them."

32.—OF THE FEAST.

When the king had said this he sat down, and made them take off his shoes, and put corduvan boots on, to which he bound his gold spurs. Then he put off his cloak and coat, and dressed himself in his finest clothes, with a scarlet cloak over all; girded on his sword, set a gilded helmet upon his head, and mounted his horse. He sent his labouring people out to the neighbourhood, and gathered to him thirty well-clothed men, and rode home with them. As they rode up to the house, and were near the room, they saw on the other side of the house the banners of Olaf coming waving; and there was he himself, with about 100 men all well equipped. People were gathered over all upon the house-tops. King Sigurd immediately saluted his stepson from horseback in a friendly way, and invited him and his men to come in and drink a cup with him. Asta, on the contrary, went up and kissed her son,

and invited him to stay with her; and land, and people, and all the good she could do for him stood at his service. King Olaf thanked her kindly for her invitation. Then she took him by the hand, and led him into the room to the high-seat. King Sigurd got men to take charge of their clothes, and give their horses corn; and then he himself went to his high-seat, and the feast was made with the greatest splendour.

33.—CONVERSATION OF OLAF AND SIGURD.

King Olaf had not been long here before he one day called his stepfather King Sigurd, his mother Asta, and his foster-father Hrane to a conference and consultation. Olaf began thus: "It has so happened," said he, "as is well known to you, that I have returned to this country after a very long sojourn in foreign parts, during all which time I and my men have had nothing for our support but what we captured in war, for which we have often hazarded both life and soul; for many an innocent man have we deprived of his property, and some of their lives; and foreigners are now sitting in the possessions which my father, his father, and their forefathers for a long series of generations owned, and to which I have udal right. They have not been content with this, but have taken to themselves also the properties of all our relations who are descended from Harald Harfager. To some they have left little, to others nothing at all. Now I will disclose to you what I have long concealed in my own mind, that I intend to take the heritage of my forefathers; but I will not wait upon the Danish or Swedish

king to supplicate the least thing from them, although they for the time call that their property which was Harald Harfager's heritage. To say the truth, I intend rather to seek my patrimony with battle-axe and sword, and that with the help of all my friends and relations, and of those who in this business will take my side. And in this matter I will so lay hand to the work that one of two things shall happen,—either I shall lay all this kingdom under my rule which they got into their hands by the slaughter of my kinsman Olaf Trygvason, or I shall fall here upon my inheritance in the land of my fathers. Now I expect of thee, Sigurd, my stepfather, as well as other men here in the country who have udal right of succession to the kingdom, according to the law made by King Harald Harfager, that nothing shall be of such importance to you as to prevent you from throwing off the disgrace from our family of being slow at supporting the man who comes forward to raise up again our race. But whether ye show any manhood in this affair or not, I know the inclination of the people well,—that all want to be free from the slavery of foreign masters, and will give aid and strength to the attempt. I have not proposed this matter to any before thee, because I know thou art a man of understanding, and can best judge how this my purpose shall be brought forward in the beginning, and whether we shall, in all quietness, talk about it to a few persons, or instantly declare it to the people at large. I have already shown my teeth by taking prisoner the Earl Hakon, who has now left the country, and given me, under oath, the part of the kingdom which he had before; and I

think it will be easier to have Earl Svein alone to deal with, than if both were defending the country against us."

King Sigurd answers, "It is no small affair, King Olaf, thou hast in thy mind; and thy purpose comes more, methinks, from hasty pride than from prudence. But it may be there is a wide difference between my humble ways and the high thoughts thou hast; for whilst yet in thy childhood thou wast full always of ambition and desire of command, and now thou art experienced in battles, and hast formed thyself upon the manner of foreign chiefs. I know therefore well, that as thou hast taken this into thy head, it is useless to dissuade thee from it; and also it is not to be denied that it goes to the heart of all who have courage in them, that the whole Harfager race and kingdom should go to the ground. But I will not bind myself by any promise, before I know the views and intentions of other Upland kings; but thou hast done well in letting me know thy purpose, before declaring it publicly to the people. I will promise thee, however, my interest with the kings, and other chiefs, and country people; and also, King Olaf, all my property stands to thy aid, and to strengthen thee. But we will only produce the matter to the community so soon as we see some progress, and expect some strength to this undertaking; for thou canst easily perceive that it is a daring measure to enter into strife with Olaf the Swedish king, and Canute, who is king both of Denmark and England; and thou requirest great support under thee, if it is to succeed. It is not unlikely, in my opinion, that thou wilt get good support from the people, as the com-

monalty always loves what is new; and it went so before, when Olaf Trygvason came here to the country, that all rejoiced at it, although he did not long enjoy the kingdom."

When the consultation had proceeded so far, Asta took up the word. "For my part, my son, I am rejoiced at thy arrival, but much more at thy advancing thy honour. I will spare nothing for that purpose that stands in my power, although it be but little help that can be expected from me. But if a choice could be made, I would rather that thou shouldst be the supreme king of Norway, even if thou shouldst not sit longer in thy kingdom than Olaf Trygvason did, than that thou shouldst not be a greater king than Sigurd Syr is, and die the death of old age." With this the conference closed. King Olaf remained here a while with all his men. King Sigurd entertained them, day about, the one day with fish and milk, the other day with flesh-meat and ale.

34.—KINGS IN THE UPLAND DISTRICTS.

At that time there were many kings in the Uplands who had districts to rule over, and the most of them were descended from Harald Harfager. In Hedemark two brothers ruled—Hrorek and Ring; in Gudbrandsdal, Gudrod: and there was also a king in Raumarike; and one had Hadaland and Thoten; and in Valders also there was a king. With these district-kings Sigurd had a meeting up in Hadaland, and Olaf Haraldson also met with them. To these district-kings whom Sigurd had assembled he set forth his stepson Olaf's purpose, and

asked their aid, both of men and in counsel and consent; and represented to them how necessary it was to cast off the yoke which the Danes and Swedes had laid upon them. He said that there was now a man before them who could head such an enterprise; and he recounted the many brave actions which Olaf had achieved upon his war-expeditions.

Then King Hrorek says, "True it is that Harald Harfager's kingdom has gone to decay, none of his race being supreme king over Norway. But the people here in the country have experienced many things. When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was king, all were content; but when Gunhild's sons ruled over the country, all were so weary of their tyranny and injustice that they would rather have foreign men as kings, and be themselves more their own rulers; for the foreign kings were usually abroad, and cared little about the customs of the people if the scat they laid on the country was paid. When enmity arose between the Danish King Harald and Earl Hakon, the Jomsborg vikings made an expedition against Norway; then the whole people arose, and threw the hostilities from themselves; and thereafter the people encouraged Earl Hakon to keep the country, and defend it with sword and spear against the Danish king. But when he had set himself fast in the kingdom with the help of the people, he became so hard and overbearing towards the country-folks, that they would no longer suffer him. The Throndhjem people killed him, and raised to the kingly power Olaf Trygvason, who was of the udal succession to the kingdom, and in all respects well fitted to

be a chief. The whole country's desire was to make him supreme king, and raise again the kingdom which Harald Harfager had made for himself. But when King Olaf thought himself quite firmly seated in his kingdom, no man could rule his own concerns for him. With us small kings he was so unreasonable, as to take to himself not only all the scat and duties which Harald Harfager had levied from us, but a great deal more. The people at last had so little freedom under him, that it was not allowed to every man to believe in what god he pleased. Now since he has been taken away we have kept friendly with the Danish king; have received great help from him when we have had any occasion for it; and have been allowed to rule ourselves, and live in peace and quiet in the inland country, and without any overburden. I am therefore content that things be as they are, for I do not see what better rights I am to enjoy by one of my relations ruling over the country; and if I am to be no better off, I will take no part in the affair."

Then said King Ring, his brother, "I will also declare my opinion that it is better for me, if I hold the same power and property as now, that my relative is king over Norway, rather than a foreign chief, so that our family may again raise its head in the land. It is, besides, my opinion about this man Olaf, that his fate and luck must determine whether he is to obtain the kingdom or not! and if he succeed in making himself supreme king, then he will be the best off who has best deserved his friendship. At present he has in no respect greater power than any of us; nay, indeed, he has less; as we have lands and

kingdoms to rule over, and he has nothing, and we are equally entitled by the udal right to the kingdom as he is himself. Now, if we will be his men, give him our aid, allow him to take the highest dignity in the country, and stand by him with our strength, how should he not reward us well, and hold it in remembrance to our great advantage, if he be the honourable man I believe him to be, and all say he is? Therefore let us join the adventure, say I, and bind ourselves in friendship with him."

Then the others, one after the other, stood up and spoke; and the conclusion was, that the most of them determined to enter into a league with King Olaf. He promised them his perfect friendship, and that he would hold by and improve the country's laws and rights, if he became supreme king of Norway. This league was confirmed by oath.

35.—OLAF GETS THE TITLE OF KING FROM THE THING.

Thereafter the kings summoned a Thing, and there King Olaf set forth this determination to all the people, and his demand on the kingly power. He desires that the bondes should receive him as king; and promises, on the other hand, to allow them to retain their ancient laws, and to defend the land from foreign masters and chiefs. On this point he spoke well, and long; and he got great praise for his speech. Then the kings rose and spoke, the one after the other, and supported his cause, and this message to the people. At last it came to this, that King Olaf was proclaimed king over the whole country, and the

kingdom adjudged to him according to law in the Uplands (1014).

36.—KING OLAF TRAVELS IN THE UPLANDS.

King Olaf began immediately his progress through the country, appointing feasts before him wherever there were royal farms. First he travelled round in Hadaland, and then he proceeded north to Gudbrandsdal. And now it went as King Sigurd Syr had foretold, that people streamed to him from all quarters; and he did not appear to have need for half of them, for he had nearly 300 men. But the entertainments bespoken did not half serve: for it had been the custom that kings went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands with 60 or 70 men only, and never with more than 100 men. The king therefore hastened over the country, only stopping one night at the same place. When he came north to Dovrefield, he arranged his journey so that he came over the mountain and down upon the north side of it, and then came to Opdal, where he remained all night. Afterwards he proceeded through Opdal forest, and came out at Medaldal, where he proclaimed a Thing, and summoned the bondes to meet him at it. The king made a speech to the Thing, and asked the bondes to accept him as king; and promised, on his part, the laws and rights which King Olaf Trygvason had offered them. The bondes had no strength to make opposition to the king; so the result was that they received him as king, and confirmed it by oath: but they sent word to Orkadal and Skaun of all that they knew concerning Olaf's proceedings.

37.—LEVY AGAINST OLAF IN THRONDHJEM.

Einar Tambaskelfer had a farm and house at Husaby in Skaun; and now when he got news of Olaf's proceedings, he immediately split up a war-arrow, and sent it out as a token to the four quarters—north, south, east, west,—to call together all free and unfree men in full equipment of war: therewith the message, that they were to defend the land against King Olaf. The message-stick went to Orkadal, and thence to Gaulardal, where the whole war-force was to assemble.

38.—OLAF'S PROGRESS IN THRONDHJEM.

King Olaf proceeded with his men down into Orkadal, and advanced in peace and with all gentleness; but when he came to Griotar he met the assembled bondes, amounting to more than 700 men. Then the king arrayed his army, for he thought the bondes were to give battle. When the bondes saw this, they also began to put their men in order; but it went on very slowly, for they had not agreed beforehand who among them should be commander. Now when King Olaf saw there was confusion among the bondes, he sent to them Thorer Gudbrandson; and when he came he told them King Olaf did not want to fight them, but named twelve of the ablest men in their flock of people, who were desired to come to King Olaf. The bondes agreed to this; and the twelve men went over a rising ground which is there, and came to the place where the king's army stood in array. The king said to them, "Ye bondes have done well to give me

an opportunity to speak with you, for now I will explain to you my errand here to the Throndhjem country. First I must tell you, what ye already must have heard, that Earl Hakon and I met in summer; and the issue of our meeting was, that he gave me the whole kingdom he possessed in the Throndhjem country, which, as ye know, consists of Orkadal, Gaulardal, Strind, and Eyna district. As a proof of this, I have here with me the very men who were present, and saw the earl's and my own hands given upon it, and heard the word and oath, and witnessed the agreement the earl made with me. Now I offer you peace and law, the same as King Olaf Trygvason offered before me."

The king spoke well, and long; and ended by proposing to the bondes two conditions—either to go into his service and be subject to him, or to fight him. Thereupon the twelve bondes went back to their people, and told the issue of their errand, and considered with the people what they should resolve upon. Although they discussed the matter backwards and forwards for a while, they preferred at last to submit to the king; and it was confirmed by the oath of the bondes. The king now proceeded on his journey, and the bondes made feasts for him. The king then proceeded to the sea-coast, and got ships; and among others he got a long-ship of twenty benches of rowers from Gunnar of Gelmin; another ship of twenty benches he got from Loden of Viggia; and three ships of twenty benches from the farm of Angrar on the ness, which farm Earl Hakon had possessed, but a steward managed it for him, by name Bard White. The king had, besides, four or

five boats; and with these vessels he went in all haste into the fjord of Throndhjem.

39.—OF EARL SVEIN'S PROCEEDINGS.

Earl Svein was at that time far up in the Throndhjem fjord at Steinker, which at that time was a merchant town, and was there preparing for the Yule festival (1015). When Einar Tambaskelfer heard that the Orkadal people had submitted to King Olaf, he sent men to Earl Svein to bring him the tidings. They went first to Nidaros, and took a rowing-boat which belonged to Einar, with which they went out into the fjord, and came one day late in the evening to Steinker, where they brought to the earl the news about all King Olaf's proceedings. The earl owned a long-ship, which was lying afloat and rigged just outside the town; and immediately, in the evening, he ordered all his movable goods, his people's clothes, and also meat and drink, as much as the vessel could carry, to be put on board, rowed immediately out in the night-time, and came with daybreak to Skarnsund. There he saw King Olaf rowing in with his fleet into the fjord. The earl turned towards the land within Masarvik, where there was a thick wood, and lay so near the rocks that the leaves and branches hung over the vessel. They cut down some large trees, which they laid over the quarter on the sea-side, so that the ship could not be seen for leaves, especially as it was scarcely clear daylight when the king came rowing past them. The weather was calm, and the king rowed in among the islands; and when the king's fleet was out of sight the earl rowed out of

the fjord, and on to Frosta, where his kingdom lay, and there he landed.

40.—EARL SVEIN'S AND EINAR'S CONSULTATIONS.

Earl Svein sent men out to Gaulardal to his brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer; and when Einar came the earl told him how it had been with him and King Olaf, and that now he would assemble men to go out against King Olaf, and fight him.

Einar answers, "We should go to work cautiously, and find out what King Olaf intends doing; and not let him hear anything concerning us but that we are quiet. It may happen that if he hears nothing about our assembling people, he may sit quietly where he is in Steinker all the Yule; for there is plenty prepared for him for the Yule feast: but if he hears we are assembling men, he will set right out of the fjord with his vessels, and we shall not get hold of him." Einar's advice was taken; and the earl went to Stjoradal, into guest-quarters among the bondes.

When King Olaf came to Steinker he collected all the meat prepared for the Yule feast, and made it be put on board, procured some transport vessels, took meat and drink with him, and got ready to sail as fast as possible, and went out all the way to Nidaros. Here King Olaf Trygvason had laid the foundation of a merchant town, and had built a king's house; but before that Nidaros was only a single house, as before related. When Earl Eirik came to the country, he applied all his attention to his house of Lade, where his father had had his main residence, and he neglected the houses which Olaf had erected

at the Nid; so that some were fallen down, and those which stood were scarcely habitable. King Olaf went now with his ships up the Nid, made all the houses to be put in order directly that were still standing, and built anew those that had fallen down, and employed in this work a great many people. Then he had all the meat and drink brought on shore to the houses, and prepared to hold Yule there; so Earl Svein and Enar had to fall upon some other plan.

41.—OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

There was an Iceland man called Thord Sigvaldaskald, who had been long with Earl Sigvalde, and afterwards with the earl's brother, Thorkel the Tall; but after the earl's death Thord had become a merchant. He met King Olaf on his viking cruise in the west, and entered into his service, and followed him afterwards. He was with the king when the incidents above related took place. Thord had a son called Sigvat fostered in the house of Thorkel at Apavatn, in Iceland. When he was nearly a grown man he went out of the country with some merchants; and the ship came in autumn to the Throndhjem country, and the crew lodged in the hered (district). The same winter King Olaf came to Throndhjem, as just now related by us. Now when Sigvat heard that his father Thord was with the king, he went to him, and stayed a while with him. Sigvat was a good skald at an early age. He made a lay in honour of King Olaf, and asked the king to listen to it. The king said he did not want poems composed about him, and said he did not understand the skald's craft. Then Sigvat sang:—

"Rider of dark-blue ocean's steeds!
Allow one skald to sing thy deeds;
And listen to the song of one
Who can sing well, if any can.
For should the king despise all others,
And show no favour to my brothers,
Yet I may all men's favour claim,
Who sing still of our great king's fame."

King Olaf gave Sigvat as a reward for his verse a gold ring that weighed half a mark, and Sigvat was made one of King Olaf's court-men. Then Sigvat sang:—

"I willingly receive this sword—
By land or sea, on shore, on board,
I trust that I shall ever be
Worthy the sword received from thee.
A faithful follower thou hast bound—
A generous master I have found;
Master and servant both have made
Just what best suits them by this trade."

Earl Svein had, according to custom, taken one half of the harbour-dues from the Iceland ship-traders about autumn (1014); for the Earls Eirik and Hakon had always taken one half of these and all other revenues in the Throndhjem country. Now when King Olaf came there, he sent his men to demand that half of the tax from the Iceland traders; and they went up to the king's house, and asked Sigvat to help them. He went to the king, and sang:—

"My prayer, I trust, will not be vain—
No gold by it have I to gain;
All that the king himself here wins
Is not red gold, but a few skins.
It is not right that these poor men
Their harbour-dues should pay again.
That they paid once I know is true;
Remit, great king, what scarce is due."

42.—OF EARL SVEIN.

Earl Svein and Einar Tambaskelfer gathered a large armed force, with which they came by the upper road into Gaulardal, and so down to Nidaros, with nearly 2000 men. King Olaf's men were out upon the Gaular ridge, and had a guard on horseback. They became aware that a force was coming down the Gaulardal, and they brought

word of it to the king about midnight. The king got up immediately, ordered the people to be wakened, and they went on board of the ships, bearing all their clothes and arms on board, and all that they could take with them, and then rowed out of the river. Then came the earl's men to the town at the same moment, took all the Christmas provision, and set fire to the houses. King Olaf went out of the fjord down to Orkadal, and there landed the men from their ships. From Orkadal they went up to the mountains, and over the mountains eastwards into Gudbrandsdal. In the lines composed about Kleng Brusason, it is said that Earl Eirik burned the town of Nidaros:—

"The king's half-finished hall,
Rafters, roof, and all,
Is burned down by the river's side;
The flame spreads o'er the city wide."

43.—OF KING OLAF.

King Olaf went southwards through Gudbrandsdal, and thence out to Hedemark. In the depth of winter (1015) he went about in guest-quarters; but when spring returned he collected men, and went to Viken. He had with him many people from Hedemark, whom the kings had given him; and also many powerful people from among the bondes joined him, among whom Ketil Kalf from Ringanes. He had also people from Raumarike. His stepfather, Sigurd Syr, gave him the help also of a great body of men. They went down from thence to the coast, and made ready to put to sea from Viken. The fleet, which was manned with many fine fellows, went out then to Tunsberg.

44.—OF EARL SVEIN'S FORCES.

After Yule (1015) Earl Svein gathers all the men of the Throndhjem country, proclaims a levy for an expedition, and fits out ships. At that time there were in the Throndhjem country a great number of lendermen; and many of them were so powerful and well-born, that they descended from earls, or even from the royal race, which in a short course of generations reckoned to Harald Harfager, and they were also very rich. These lendermen were of great help to the kings or earls who ruled the land; for it was as if the lenderman had the bonde-people of each district in his power. Earl Svein being a good friend of the lendermen, it was easy for him to collect people. His brother-in-law, Einar Tambaskelfer, was on his side, and with him many other lendermen; and among them many, both lendermen and bondes, who the winter before had taken the oath of fidelity to King Olaf. When they were ready for sea they went directly out of the fjord, steering south along the land, and drawing men from every district. When they came farther south, abreast of Rogaland, Erling Skialgson came to meet them, with many people and many lendermen with him. Now they steered eastward with their whole fleet to Viken, and Earl Svein ran in there towards the end of Easter. The earl steered his fleet to Grenmar, and ran into Nesjar (1015).

45.—KING OLAF'S FORCES.

King Olaf steered his fleet out from Viken, until the two fleets were not far from each other, and they got news

of each other the Saturday before Palm Sunday. King Olaf himself had a ship called the Carl's Head, on the bow of which a king's head was carved out, and he himself had carved it. This head was used long after in Norway on ships which kings steered themselves.

46.—KING OLAF'S SPEECH.

As soon as day dawned on Sunday morning, King Olaf got up, put on his clothes, went to the land, and ordered to sound the signal for the whole army to come on shore. Then he made a speech to the troops, and told the whole assembly that he had heard there was but a short distance between them and Earl Svein. "Now," said he, "we shall make ready; for it can be but a short time until we meet. Let the people arm, and every man be at the post that has been appointed him, so that all may be ready when I order the signal to sound for casting off from the land. Then let us row off at once; and so that none go on before the rest of the ships, and none lag behind, when I row out of the harbour: for we cannot tell if we shall find the earl where he was lying, or if he has come out to meet us. When we do meet, and the battle begins, let people be alert to bring all our ships in close order, and ready to bind them together. Let us spare ourselves in the beginning, and take care of our weapons, that we do not cast them into the sea, or shoot them away in the air to no purpose. But when the fight becomes hot, and the ships are bound together, then let each man show what is in him of manly spirit."

47.—OF THE BATTLE AT NESJAR.

King Olaf had in his ship 100 men armed in coats of ring-mail, and in foreign helmets. The most of his men had white shields, on which the holy cross was gilt; but some had painted it in blue or red. He had also had the cross painted in front on all the helmets, in a pale colour. He had a white banner on which was a serpent figured. He ordered a mass to be read before him, went on board ship, and ordered his people to refresh themselves with meat and drink. He then ordered the war-horns to sound to battle, to leave the harbour, and row off to seek the earl. Now when they came to the harbour where the earl had lain, the earl's men were armed, and beginning to row out of the harbour; but when they saw the king's fleet coming they began to bind the ships together, to set up their banners, and to make ready for the fight. When King Olaf saw this he hastened the rowing, laid his ship alongside the earl's, and the battle began. So says Sigvat the skald:—

"Boldly the king did then pursue
Earl Svein, nor let him out of view.
The blood ran down the reindeer's flank
Of each sea-king—his vessel's plank.
Nor did the earl's stout warriors spare
In battle-brunt the sword and spear.
Earl Svein his ships of war pushed on,
And lashed their stout stems one to one."

It is said that King Olaf brought his ships into battle while Svein was still lying in the harbour. Sigvat the skald was himself in the fight; and in summer, just after the battle, he composed a lay, which is called the Nesjar Song, in which he tells particularly the circumstances:—

"In the fierce fight 'tis known how near
The scorner of the ice-cold spear
Laid the Charles' head the earl on board,
All eastward of the Agder fjord."

Then was the conflict exceedingly sharp, and it was long before it could be seen how it was to go in the end. Many fell on both sides, and many were the wounded. So says Sigvat:—

"No urging did the earl require,
'Midst spear and sword—the battle's fire;
No urging did the brave king need
The ravens in this shield-storm to feed.
Of limb-lopping enough was there,
And ghastly wounds of sword and spear.
Never, I think, was rougher play
Than both the armies had that day."

The earl had most men, but the king had a chosen crew in his ship, who had followed him in all his wars; and, besides, they were so excellently equipped, as before related, that each man had a coat of ring-mail, so that he could not be wounded. So says Sigvat:—

"Our lads, broad-shouldered, tall, and hale,
Drew on their cold shirts of ring-mail.
Soon sword on sword was shrilly ringing,
And in the air the spears were singing.
Under our helms we hid our hair,
For thick flew arrows through the air.
Right glad was I our gallant crew,
Steel-clad from head to foot, to view."

48.—EARL SVEIN'S FLIGHT.

When the men began to fall on board the earl's ships, and many appeared wounded, so that the sides of the vessels were but thinly beset with men, the crew of King Olaf prepared to board. Their banner was brought up to the ship that was nearest the earl's, and the king himself followed the banner. So says Sigvat:—

"'On with the king!' his banners waving:
'On with the king!' the spears he's braving!
'On, steel-clad men! and storm the deck,
Slippery with blood and strewed with wreck.
A different work ye have to share,
His banner in war-storm to bear,
From your fair girl's, who round the hall
Brings the full mead-bowl to us all.'"

Now was the severest fighting. Many of Svein's men fell, and some sprang overboard. So says Sigvat:—

"Into the ship our brave lads spring,—
On shield and helm their red blades ring;
The air resounds with stroke on stroke,—
The shields are cleft, the helms are broke.
The wounded bonde o'er the side
Falls shrieking in the blood-stained tide—
The deck is cleared with wild uproar—
The dead crew float about the shore."

And also these lines:—

"The shields we brought from home were white,
Now they are red-stained in the fight:
This work was fit for those who wore
Ringed coats-of-mail their breasts before.
Where the foe blunted the best sword
I saw our young king climb on board.
He stormed the first; we followed him—
The ward-birds now in blood may swim."

Now defeat began to come down upon the earl's men. The king's men pressed upon the earl's ship and entered it; but when the earl saw how it was going, he called out to his forecastle-men to cut the cables and cast the ship loose, which they did. Then the king's men threw grapplings over the timber heads of the ship, and so held her fast to their own; but the earl ordered the timber heads to be cut away, which was done. So says Sigvat:—

"The earl, his noble ship to save,
To cut the posts loud order gave.
The ship escaped: our greedy eyes
Had looked on her as a clear prize.
The earl escaped; but ere he fled
We feasted Odin's fowls with dead:—
With many a goodly corpse that floated
Round our ship's stern his birds were bloated."

Einar Tambaskelfer had laid his ship right alongside the earl's. They threw an anchor over the bows of the earl's ship, and thus towed her away, and they slipped out of the fjord together. Thereafter the whole of the earl's fleet took to flight, and rowed out of the fjord. The skald Berse Torfason was on the forecastle of the earl's ship; and as it was gliding past the king's fleet, King Olaf called out to him—for he knew Berse, who was distinguished as a remarkably handsome man, always well equipped in

clothes and arms—"Farewell, Berse!" He replied, "Farewell, king!" So says Berse himself, in a poem he composed when he fell into King Olaf's power, and was laid in prison and in fetters on board a ship:—

"Olaf the Brave
A 'farewell' gave,
(No time was there to parley long,)
To me who knows the art of song.
The skald was fain
'Farewell' again
In the same terms back to send—
The rule in arms to foe or friend.
Earl Svein's distress
I well can guess,
When flight he was compelled to take:
His fortunes I will ne'er forsake.
Though I lie here
In chains a year,
In thy great vessel all forlorn,
To crouch to thee I still will scorn:
I still will say,
No milder sway
Than from thy foe this land e'er knew:
To him, my early friend, I'm true."

49.—EARL SVEIN LEAVES THE COUNTRY.

Now some of the earl's men fled up the country, some surrendered at discretion; but Svein and his followers rowed out of the fjord, and the chiefs laid their vessels together to talk with each other, for the earl wanted counsel from his lendermen. Erling Skialgson advised that they should sail north, collect people, and fight King Olaf again; but as they had lost many people, the most were of opinion that the earl should leave the country, and repair to his brother-in-law the Swedish king, and strengthen himself there with men. Einar Tambaskelfer approved also of that advice, as they had no power to hold battle against Olaf. So they discharged their fleet. The earl sailed across Folden, and with him Einar Tambaskelfer. Erling Skialgson again, and likewise many other lendermen who would not abandon their udal possessions, went north to their homes; and Erling had many people that summer about him.

50.—OLAF'S AND SIGURD'S CONSULTATION.

When King Olaf and his men saw that the earl had gathered his ships together, Sigurd Syr was in haste for pursuing the earl, and letting steel decide their cause. But King Olaf replies, that he would first see what the earl intended doing—whether he would keep his force together or discharge his fleet. Sigurd Syr said, "It is for thee, king, to command; but," he adds, "I fear, from thy disposition and wilfulness, that thou wilt some day be betrayed by trusting to those great people, for they are accustomed of old to bid defiance to their sovereigns." There was no attack made, for it was soon seen that the earl's fleet was dispersing. Then King Olaf ransacked the slain, and remained there some days to divide the booty. At that time Sigvat made these verses:—

"The tale I tell is true:
To their homes returned but few
Of Svein's men, who came to meet
King Olaf's gallant fleet.
From the North these warmen came
To try the bloody game,—
On the waves their corpses borne
Show the game that Sunday morn.
The Throndhjem girls so fair
Their jeers, I think, will spare,
For the king's force was but small
That emptied Throndhjem's hall.
But if they will have their jeer,
They may ask their sweethearts dear,
Why they have returned shorn
Who went to shear that Sunday morn."

And also these:—

"Now will the king's power rise,
For the Upland men still prize
The king who o'er the sea
Steers to bloody victory.
Earl Svein! thou now wilt know
That our lads can make blood flow—
That the Hedemarkers hale
Can do more than tap good ale."

King Olaf gave his stepfather King Sigurd Syr, and the other chiefs who had assisted him, handsome presents at parting. He gave Ketil of Ringanes a yacht of fifteen benches of rowers, which Ketil brought up the Raum river and into the Mjosen lake.

51.—OF KING OLAF.

King Olaf sent spies out to trace the earl's doings (1015); and when he found that the earl had left the country he sailed out west, and to Viken, where many people came to him. At the Thing there he was taken as king, and so he proceeded all the way to the Naze; and when he heard that Erling Skialgson had gathered a large force, he did not tarry in North Agder, but sailed with a steady fair wind to the Throndhjem country; for there it appeared to him was the greatest strength of the land, if he could subdue it for himself while the earl was abroad. When Olaf came to Throndhjem there was no opposition, and he was elected there to be king. In harvest (1015) he took his seat in the town of Nidaros, and collected the needful winter provision (1016). He built a king's house, and raised Clement's church on the spot on which it now stands. He parcelled out building ground, which he gave to bondes, merchants, or others who he thought would build. There he sat down, with many men-at-arms around him; for he put no great confidence in the Throndhjem people, if the earl should return to the country. The people of the interior of the Throndhjem country showed this clearly, for he got no land-scat from them.

52.—PLAN OF SVEIN AND THE SWEDISH KING.

Earl Svein went first to Svithjod, to his brother-in-law Olaf the Swedish king, told him all that had happened between him and Olaf the Thick, and asked his advice about what he should now undertake. The king said that the earl should stay with him if he liked, and get such a

portion of his kingdom to rule over as should seem to him sufficient; "or otherwise," says he, "I will give thee help of forces to conquer the country again from Olaf." The earl chose the latter; for all those among his men who had great possessions in Norway, which was the case with many who were with him, were anxious to get back; and in the council they held about this, it was resolved that in winter they should take the land-way over Helsingjaland and Jamtaland, and so down into the Throndhjem land; for the earl reckoned most upon the faithful help and strength of the Throndhjem people of the interior as soon as he should appear there. In the meantime, however, it was determined to take a cruise in summer in the Baltic to gather property.

53.—EARL SVEIN'S DEATH.

Earl Svein went eastward with his forces to Russia, and passed the summer (1015) in marauding there; but on the approach of autumn returned with his ships to Svithjod. There he fell into a sickness, which proved fatal. After the earl's death some of the people who had followed him remained in Svithjod; others went to Helsingjaland, thence to Jamtaland, and so from the east over the dividing ridge of the country to the Throndhjem district, where they told all that had happened upon their journey: and thus the truth of Earl Svein's death was known (1016).

54.—OF THE THRONDHJEM PEOPLE.

Einar Tambaskelfer, and the people who had followed him went in winter to the Swedish king, and were

received in a friendly manner. There were also among them many who had followed the earl. The Swedish king took it much amiss that Olaf the Thick had set himself down in his scat-lands, and driven the earl out of them, and therefore he threatened the king with his heaviest vengeance when opportunity offered. He said that Olaf ought not to have had the presumption to take the dominions which the earl had held of him; and all the Swedish king's men agreed with him. But the Throndhjem people, when they heard for certain that the earl was dead, and could not be expected back to Norway, turned all to obedience to King Olaf. Many came from the interior of the Throndhjem country, and became King Olaf's men; others sent word and tokens that they would serve him. Then, in autumn, he went into the interior of Throndhjem, and held Things with the bondes, and was received as king in each district. He returned to Nidaros, and brought there all the king's scat and revenue, and had his winter-seat provided there (1016).

55.—OF KING OLAF'S HOUSEHOLD.

King Olaf built a king's house in Nidaros, and in it was a large room for his court, with doors at both ends. The king's high-seat was in the middle of the room; and within sat his court-bishop, Grimkel, and next him his other priests; without them sat his counsellors; and in the other high-seat opposite to the king sat his marshal, Bjorn, and next to him his pursuivants. When people of importance came to him, they also had a seat of honour. The ale was drunk by the fire-light. He divided the service

among his men after the fashion of other kings. He had in his house sixty court-men and thirty pursuivants; and to them he gave pay and certain regulations. He had also thirty house-servants to do the needful work about the house, and procure what was required. He had, besides, many slaves. At the house were many outbuildings, in which the court-men slept. There was also a large room, in which the king held his court-meetings.

56.—OF KING OLAF'S HABITS.

It was King Olaf's custom to rise betimes in the morning, put on his clothes, wash his hands, and then go to the church and hear the matins and morning mass. Thereafter he went to the Thing-meeting, to bring people to agreement with each other, or to talk of one or the other matter that appeared to him necessary. He invited to him great and small who were known to be men of understanding. He often made them recite to him the laws which Hakon Athelstan's foster-son had made for Throndhjem; and after considering them with those men of understanding, he ordered laws adding to or taking from those established before. But Christian privileges he settled according to the advice of Bishop Grimkel and other learned priests; and bent his whole mind to uprooting heathenism, and old customs which he thought contrary to Christianity. And he succeeded so far that the bondes accepted of the laws which the king proposed. So says Sigvat:—

"The king, who at the helm guides
His warlike ship through clashing tides,
Now gives one law for all the land—
A heavenly law, which long will stand."

King Olaf was a good and very gentle man, of little speech, and open-handed although greedy of money. Sigvat the skald, as before related, was in King Olaf's house, and several Iceland men. The king asked particularly how Christianity was observed in Iceland, and it appeared to him to be very far from what it ought to be; for, as to observing Christian practices, it was told the king that it was permitted there to eat horse-flesh, to expose infants as heathens do, besides many other things contrary to Christianity. They also told the king about many principal men who were then in Iceland. Skapte Thorodson was then the lagman of the country. He inquired also of those who were best acquainted with it about the state of people in other distant countries; and his inquiries turned principally on how Christianity was observed in the Orkney, Shetland, and Farey Islands: and, as far as he could learn, it was far from being as he could have wished. Such conversation was usually carried on by him; or else he spoke about the laws and rights of the country.

57.—KING OLAF'S MESSENGERS.

The same winter (1016) came messengers from the Swedish king, Olaf the Swede, out of Svithjod; and their leaders were two brothers, Thorgaut Skarde and Asgaut the bailiff; and they had twenty-four men with them. When they came from the eastward, over the ridge of the country down into Veradal, they summoned a Thing of the bondes, talked to them, and demanded of them scat and duties upon account of the king of Sweden. But the

bondes, after consulting with each other, determined only to pay the scat which the Swedish king required in so far as King Olaf required none upon his account, but refused to pay scat to both. The messengers proceeded farther down the valley; but received at every Thing they held the same answer, and no money. They went forward to Skaun, held a Thing there, and demanded scat; but it went there as before. Then they came to Stjoradal, and summoned a Thing, but the bondes would not come to it. Now the messengers saw that their business was a failure; and Thorgaut proposed that they should turn about, and go eastward again. "I do not think," says Asgaut, "that we have performed the king's errand unless we go to King Olaf the Thick, since the bondes refer the matter to him." He was their commander; so they proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and took lodging there. The day after they presented themselves to the king, just as he was seated at table, saluted him, and said they came with a message of the Swedish king. The king told them to come to him next day. Next day the king, having heard mass, went to his Thing-house, ordered the messengers of the Swedish king to be called, and told them to produce their message. Then Thorgaut spoke, and told first what his errand was, and next how the Throndhjem people of the interior had replied to it; and asked the king's decision on the business, that they might know what result their errand there was to have. The king answers, "While the earls ruled over the country, it was not to be wondered at if the country people thought themselves bound to obey them, as they were at least of the royal race of the king-

dom. But it would have been more just if those earls had given assistance and service to the kings who had a right to the country, rather than to foreign kings, or to stir up opposition to their lawful kings, depriving them of their land and kingdom. With regard to Olaf the Swede, who calls himself entitled to the kingdom of Norway, I, who in fact am so entitled, can see no ground for his claim; but well remember the skaith and damage we have suffered from him and his relations."

Then says Asgaut, "It is not wonderful that thou art called Olaf the Thick, seeing thou answerest so haughtily to such a prince's message, and canst not see clearly how heavy the king's wrath will be for thee to support, as many have experienced who had greater strength than thou appearest to have. But if thou wishest to keep hold of thy kingdom, it will be best for thee to come to the king, and be his man; and we shall beg him to give thee this kingdom in fief under him."

The king replies with all gentleness, "I will give thee an advice, Asgaut, in return. Go back to the east again to thy king, and tell him that early in spring I will make myself ready, and will proceed eastward to the ancient frontier that divided formerly the kingdom of the kings of Norway from Sweden. There he may come if he likes, that we may conclude a peace with each other; and each of us will retain the kingdom to which he is born."

Now the messengers turned back to their lodging, and prepared for their departure, and the king went to table. The messengers came back soon after to the king's house; but the doorkeepers saw it, and reported it to the king, who

Olaf Trygvason, and afterwards the Earls Svein and Hakon, had given him, and on that condition would be his man and dutiful friend, the king answered, "It appears to me, Erling, that it would be no bad bargain for thee to get as great fiefs from me for thy aid and friendship as thou hadst from Earl Eirik, a man who had done thee the greatest injury by the bloodshed of thy men; but even if I let thee remain the greatest lenderman in Norway, I will bestow my fiefs according to my own will, and not act as if ye lendermen had udal right to my ancestor's heritage, and I was obliged to buy your services with manifold rewards." Erling had no disposition to sue for even the smallest thing; and he saw that the king was not easily dealt with. He saw also that he had only two conditions before him: the one was to make no agreement with the king, and stand by the consequences; the other, to leave it entirely to the king's pleasure Although it was much against his inclination, he chose the latter, and merely said to the king, "The service will be the most useful to thee which I give with a free will." And thus their conference ended. Erling's relations and friends came to him afterwards, and advised him to give way, and proceed with more prudence and less pride. "Thou wilt still," they said, "be the most important and most respected lenderman in Norway, both on account of thy own and thy relations' abilities and great wealth." Erling found that this was prudent advice, and that they who gave it did so with a good intention, and he followed it accordingly. Erling went into the king's service on such conditions as the king himself should determine and

out of the law whatever appeared contrary to Christianity. He sent, besides, a message of friendship to the people in general. The king then proceeded southwards himself along the coast, stopping at every district, and holding Things with the bondes; and in each Thing he ordered the Christian law to be read, together with the message of salvation thereunto belonging, and with which many ill customs and much heathenism were swept away at once among the common people: for the earls had kept well the old laws and rights of the country; but with respect to keeping Christianity, they had allowed every man to do as he liked. It was thus come so far that the people were baptized in the most places on the sea-coast, but the most of them were ignorant of Christian law. In the upper ends of the valleys, and in the habitations among the mountains, the greater part of the people were heathen; for when the common man is left to himself, the faith he has been taught in his childhood is that which has the strongest hold over his inclination. But the king threatened the most violent proceedings against great or small, who, after the king's message, would not adopt Christianity. In the meantime Olaf was proclaimed king in every Law Thing in the country, and no man spoke against him. While he lay in Karmtsund messengers went between him and Erling Skjalgson, who endeavoured to make peace between them; and the meeting was appointed in Whitings Isle. When they met they spoke with each other about agreement together; but Erling found something else than he expected in the conversation: for when he insisted on having all the fiefs which

the sea; but towards the north the forests until Eid forest, and from thence the ridge of the country all north to Finmark. We know, also, that by turns they have made inroads upon each other's territories, and that the Swedes have long had power all the way to Svinasund. But, sooth to say, I know that it is the inclination of many rather to serve the king of Norway, but they dare not; for the Swedish king's dominions surround us, both eastward, southwards, and also up the country; and besides, it may be expected that the king of Norway must soon go to the north, where the strength of his kingdom lies, and then we have no power to withstand the Gautlanders. Now it is for the king to give us good counsel, for we have great desire to be his men." After the Thing, in the evening, Brynjolf was in the king's tent, and the day after likewise, and they had much private conversation together. Then the king proceeded eastwards along Viken. Now when Eilif heard of his arrival, he sent out spies to discover what he was about; but he himself, with thirty men, kept himself high up in the habitations among the hills, where he had gathered together bondes. Many of the bondes came to King Olaf, but some sent friendly messages to him. People went between King Olaf and Eilif, and they entreated each separately to hold a Thing-meeting between themselves, and make peace in one way or another. They told Eilif that they might expect violent treatment from King Olaf if they opposed his orders; but promised Eilif he should not want men. It was determined that they should come down from the high country, and hold a thing with the bondes and the king. King Olaf

thereupon sent the chief of his pursuivants, Thorer Lange, with six men, to Brynjolf. They were equipped with their coats-of-mail under their cloaks, and their hats over their helmets. The following day the bondes came in crowds down with Eilif; and in his suite was Brynjolf, and with him Thorer. The king laid his ships close to a rocky knoll that stuck out into the sea, and upon it the king went with his people, and sat down. Below was a flat field, on which the bondes' force was; but Eilif's men were drawn up, forming a shield-fence before him. Bjorn the marshal spoke long and cleverly upon the king's account, and when he sat down Eilif arose to speak; but at the same moment Thorer Lange rose, drew his sword, and struck Eilif on the neck, so that his head flew off. Then the whole bonde-force started up; but the Gautland men set off in full flight, and Thorer with his people killed several of them. Now when the crowd was settled again, and the noise over, the king stood up, and told the bondes to seat themselves. They did so, and then much was spoken. The end of it was, that they submitted to the king, and promised fidelity to him; and he, on the other hand, promised not to desert them, but to remain at hand until the discord between him and the Swedish Olaf was settled in one way or other. King Olaf then brought the whole northern district under his power, and went in summer eastward as far as the Gaut river, and got all the king's scat among the islands. But when summer (1016) was drawing towards an end he returned north to Viken, and sailed up the Raum river to a waterfall called Sarp. On the north side of the fall, a point of land juts out into

the river. There the king ordered a rampart to be built right across the ness, of stone, turf, and wood, and a ditch to be dug in front of it; so that it was a large earthen fort or burgh, which he made a merchant town of. He had a king's house put up, and ordered the building of Mary church. He also laid out plans for other houses, and got people to build on them. In harvest (1016) he let everything be gathered there that was useful for his winter residence (1017), and sat there with a great many people, and the rest he quartered in the neighbouring districts. The king prohibited all exports from Viken to Gautland of herrings and salt, which the Gautland people could ill do without. This year the king held a great Yule feast, to which he invited many great bondes.

60.—THE HISTORY OF EYVIND URARHORN.

There was a man called Eyvind Urarhorn, who was a great man, of high birth, who had his descent from the East Agder country. Every summer he went out on a viking cruise, sometimes to the West sea, sometimes to the Baltic, sometimes south to Flanders, and had a well-armed cutter (snekkia) of twenty benches of rowers. He had been also at Nesjar, and given his aid to the king; and when they separated the king promised him his favour, and Eyvind, again, promised to come to the king's aid whenever he was required. This winter (1017) Eyvind was at the Yule feast of the king, and received goodly gifts from him. Brynjolf Ulfalde was also with the king, and he received a Yule present from the king of a gold-mounted sword, and also a farm called Vettaland,

which is a very large head-farm of the district. Brynjolf composed a song about these gifts, of which the refrain was—

"The song-famed hero to my hand
Gave a good sword, and Vettaland."

The king afterwards gave him the title of Lenderman, and Brynjolf was ever after the king's greatest friend.

61.—THRAND WHITE'S MURDER.

This winter (1017) Thrand White from Throndhjem went east to Jamtaland, to take up scat upon account of King Olaf. But when he had collected the scat he was surprised by men of the Swedish king, who killed him and his men, twelve in all, and brought the scat to the Swedish king. King Olaf was very ill-pleased when he heard this news.

62.—CHRISTIANITY PROCLAIMED IN VIKEN.

King Olaf made Christian law to be proclaimed in Viken, in the same way as in the North country. It succeeded well, because the people of Viken were better acquainted with the Christian customs than the people in the north; for, both winter and summer, there were many merchants in Viken, both Danish and Saxon. The people of Viken, also, had much trading intercourse with England, and Saxony, and Flanders, and Denmark; and some had been on viking expeditions, and had had their winter abode in Christian lands.

63.—HROE'S FALL.

About spring-time (1017) King Olaf sent a message that Eyvind Urarhorn should come to him; and they

spake together in private for a long time. Thereafter Eyvind made himself ready for a viking cruise. He sailed south towards Viken, and brought up at the Eikreys Isles without Hising Isle. There he heard that Hroe Skialge had gone northwards towards Ordost, and had there made a levy of men and goods on account of the Swedish king, and was expected from the north. Eyvind rowed in by Haugasund, and Hroe came rowing from the north, and they met in the sound and fought. Hroe fell there, with nearly thirty men; and Eyvind took all the goods Hroe had with him. Eyvind then proceeded to the Baltic, and was all summer on a viking cruise.

64.—FALL OF GUDLEIK AND THORGAUT.

There was a man called Gudleik Gerske, who came originally from Agder. He was a great merchant, who went far and wide by sea, was very rich, and drove a trade with various countries. He often went east to Gardarike (Russia), and therefore was called Gudleik Gerske (the Russian). This spring (1017) Gudleik fitted out his ship, and intended to go east in summer to Russia. King Olaf sent a message to him that he wanted to speak to him; and when Gudleik came to the king he told him he would go in partnership with him, and told him to purchase some costly articles which were difficult to be had in this country. Gudleik said that it should be according to the king's desire. The king ordered as much money to be delivered to Gudleik as he thought sufficient, and then Gudleik set out for the Baltic. They lay in a sound in Gotland; and there it happened, as it often does,

that people cannot keep their own secrets, and the people of the country came to know that in this ship was Olaf the Thick's partner. Gudleik went in summer eastwards to Novgorod, where he bought fine and costly clothes, which he intended for the king as a state dress; and also precious furs, and remarkably splendid table utensils. In autumn (1017), as Gudleik was returning from the east, he met a contrary wind, and lay for a long time at the island Eyland. There came Thorgaut Skarde, who in autumn had heard of Gudleik's course, in a long-ship against him, and gave him battle. They fought long, and Gudleik and his people defended themselves for a long time; but the numbers against them were great, and Gudleik and many of his ship's crew fell, and a great many of them were wounded. Thorgaut took all their goods, and King Olaf's, and he and his comrades divided the booty among them equally; but he said the Swedish king ought to have the precious articles of King Olaf, as these, he said, should be considered as part of the scat due to him from Norway. Thereafter Thorgaut proceeded east to Svithjod. These tidings were soon known; and as Eyvind Urarhorn came soon after to Eyland, he heard the news, and sailed east after Thorgaut and his troop, and overtook them among the Swedish isles on the coast, and gave battle. There Thorgaut and the most of his men were killed, and the rest sprang overboard. Eyvind took all the goods and all the costly articles of King Olaf which they had captured from Gudleik, and went with these back to Norway in autumn, and delivered to King Olaf his precious wares. The king thanked him in the most friendly way for his

proceeding, and promised him anew his favour and friendship. At this time Olaf had been three years king over Norway (1015-1017).

65.—MEETING OF OLAF AND RAGNVALD.

The same summer (1017) King Olaf ordered a levy, and went out eastwards to the Gaut river, where he lay a great part of the summer. Messages were passing between King Olaf, Earl Ragnvald, and the earl's wife, Ingebjorg, the daughter of Trygve. She was very zealous about giving King Olaf of Norway every kind of help, and made it a matter of her deepest interest. For this there were two causes. She had a great friendship for King Olaf; and also she could never forget that the Swedish king had been one at the death of her brother, Olaf Trygvason; and also that he, on that account only, had any pretence to rule over Norway. The earl, by her persuasion, turned much towards friendship with King Olaf; and it proceeded so far that the earl and the king appointed a meeting, and met at the Gaut river. They talked together of many things, but especially of the Norwegian and Swedish kings' relations with each other; both agreeing, as was the truth also, that it was the greatest loss, both to the people of Viken and of Gautland, that there was no peace for trade between the two countries; and at last both agreed upon a peace, and still-stand of arms between them until next summer; and they parted with mutual gifts and friendly speeches.

66.—KING OLAF THE SWEDE.

The king thereupon returned north to Viken, and had

all the royal revenues up to the Gaut river; and all the people of the country there had submitted to him. King Olaf the Swede had so great a hatred of Olaf Haraldson, that no man dared to call him by his right name in the king's hearing. They called him the thick man; and never named him without some hard by-name.

67.—ACCOUNT OF THEIR RECONCILIATION.

The bondes in Viken spoke with each other about there being nothing for it but that the kings should make peace and a league with each other, and insisted upon it that they were badly used by the kings going to war; but nobody was so bold as to bring these murmurs before the king. At last they begged Bjorn the marshal to bring this matter before the king, and entreat him to send messengers to the Swedish king to offer peace on his side. Bjorn was disinclined to do this, and put it off from himself with excuses; but on the entreaties of many of his friends, he promised at last to speak of it to the king; but declared, at the same time, that he knew it would be taken very ill by the king to propose that he should give way in anything to the Swedish king. The same summer (1017) Hjalte Skeggjason came over to Norway from Iceland, according to the message sent him by King Olaf, and went directly to the king. He was well received by the king, who told him to lodge in his house, and gave him a seat beside Bjorn the marshal, and Hjalte became his comrade at table. There was good-fellowship immediately between them.

Once, when King Olaf had assembled the people and

bondes to consult upon the good of the country, Bjorn the marshal said, "What think you, king, of the strife that is between the Swedish king and you? Many people have fallen on both sides, without its being at all more determined than before what each of you shall have of the kingdom. You have now been sitting in Viken one winter and two summers, and the whole country to the north is lying behind your back unseen; and the men who have property or udal rights in the north are weary of sitting here. Now it is the wish of the lendermen, of your other people, and of the bondes that this should come to an end. There is now a truce, agreement, and peace with the earl, and the West Gautland people who are nearest to us; and it appears to the people it would be best that you sent messengers to the Swedish king to offer a reconciliation on your side; and, without doubt, many who are about the Swedish king will support the proposal, for it is a common gain for those who dwell in both countries, both here and there." This speech of Bjorn's received great applause.

Then the king said, "It is fair, Bjorn, that the advice thou hast given should be carried out by thyself. Thou shalt undertake this embassy thyself, and enjoy the good of it, if thou hast advised well; and if it involve any man in danger, thou hast involved thyself in it. Moreover, it belongs to thy office to declare to the multitude what I wish to have told." Then the king stood up, went to the church, and had high mass sung before him; and thereafter went to table.

The following day Hjalte said to Bjorn, "Why art thou

so melancholy, man? Art thou sick, or art thou angry at any one?" Bjorn tells Hjalte his conversation with the king, and says it is a very dangerous errand.

Hjalte says, "It is their lot who follow kings that they enjoy high honours, and are more respected than other men, but stand often in danger of their lives: and they must understand how to bear both parts of their lot. The king's luck is great; and much honour will be gained by this business, if it succeed."

Bjorn answered, "Since thou makest so light of this business in thy speech, wilt thou go with me? The king has promised that I shall have companions with me on the journey."

"Certainly," says Hjalte; "I will follow thee, if thou wilt: for never again shall I fall in with such a comrade if we part."

68.—JOURNEY OF BJORN THE MARSHAL.

A few days afterwards, when the king was at a Thing-meeting, Bjorn came with eleven others. He says to the king that they were now ready to proceed on their mission, and that their horses stood saddled at the door. "And now," says he, "I would know with what errand I am to go, or what orders thou givest us."

The king replies, "Ye shall carry these my words to the Swedish king—that I will establish peace between our countries up to the frontier which Olaf Trygvason had before me; and each shall bind himself faithfully not to trespass over it. But with regard to the loss of people, no man must mention it if peace there is to be; for the Swedish king cannot with money pay for the men the

Swedes have deprived us of." Thereupon the king rose, and went out with Bjorn and his followers; and he took a gold-mounted sword and a gold ring, and said, in handing over the sword to Bjorn, "This I give thee: it was given to me in summer by Earl Ragnvald. To him ye shall go; and bring him word from me to advance your errand with his counsel and strength. This thy errand I will think well fulfilled if thou hearest the Swedish king's own words, be they yea or nay: and this gold ring thou shalt give Earl Ragnvald. These are tokens[1] he must know well."

Hjalte went up to the king, saluted him, and said, "We need much, king, that thy luck attend us;" and wished that they might meet again in good health.

The king asked where Hjalte was going.

"With Bjorn," said he.

The king said, "It will assist much to the good success of the journey that thou goest too, for thy good fortune has often been proved; and be assured that I shall wish that all my luck, if that be of any weight, may attend thee and thy company."

Bjorn and his followers rode their way, and came to Earl Ragnvald's court, where they were well received. Bjorn was a celebrated and generally known man,—known by sight and speech to all who had ever seen King Olaf; for at every Thing, Bjorn stood up and told the king's message. Ingebjorg, the earl's wife, went up to Hjalte and looked at him. She recognized him, for she

[1]Before writing was a common accomplishment in courts, the only way of accrediting a special messenger between kings and great men was by giving the messenger a token; that is, some article well known by the person receiving the message to be the property of and valued by the person sending it.

was living with her brother Olaf Trygvason when Hjalte was there: and she knew how to reckon up the relationship between King Olaf and Vilborg, the wife of Hjalte; for Eirik Bjodaskalle father of Astrid, King Olaf Trygvason's mother, and Bodvar father of Olaf, mother of Gissur White the father of Vilborg, were brother's sons of the lenderman Vikingakare of Vors.

They enjoyed here good entertainment. One day Bjorn entered into conversation with the earl and Ingebjorg, in which he set forth his errand, and produced to the earl his tokens.

The earl replies, "What hast thou done, Bjorn, that the king wishes thy death? For, so far from thy errand having any success, I do not think a man can be found who could speak these words to the Swedish king without incurring wrath and punishment. King Olaf, king of Sweden, is too proud for any man to speak to him on anything he is angry at."

Then Bjorn says, "Nothing has happened to me that King Olaf is offended at; but many of his disposition act, both for themselves and others, in a way that only men who are daring can succeed in. But as yet all his plans have had good success, and I think this will turn out well too; so I assure you, earl, that I will actually travel to the Swedish king, and not turn back before I have brought to his ears every word that King Olaf told me to say to him, unless death prevent me, or that I am in bonds, and cannot perform my errand; and this I must do, whether you give any aid or no aid to me in fulfilling the king's wishes."

Then said Ingebjorg, "I will soon declare my opinion. I think, earl, thou must turn all thy attention to supporting King Olaf the king of Norway's desire that this message be laid before the Swedish king, in whatever way he may answer it. Although the Swedish king's anger should be incurred, and our power and property be at stake, yet will I rather run the risk, than that it should be said the message of King Olaf was neglected from fear of the Swedish king. Thou hast that birth, strength of relations, and other means, that here in the Swedish land it is free to thee to tell thy mind, if it be right and worthy of being heard, whether it be listened to by few or many, great or little people, or by the king himself."

The earl replies, "It is known to every one how thou urgest me: it may be, according to thy counsel, that I should promise the king's men to follow them, so that they may get their errand laid before the Swedish king, whether he take it ill or take it well. But I will have my own counsel followed, and will not run hastily into Bjorn's or any other man's measures, in such a highly important matter. It is my will that ye all remain here with me, so long as I think it necessary for the purpose of rightly forwarding this mission." Now as the earl had thus given them to understand that he would support them in the business, Bjorn thanked him most kindly, and with the assurance that his advice should rule them altogether. Thereafter Bjorn and his fellow-travellers remained very long in the earl's house.

69.—CONVERSATION OF BJORN AND INGEBJORG.

Ingebjorg was particularly kind to them; and Bjorn

often spoke with her about the matter, and was ill at ease that their journey was so long delayed. Hjalte and the others often spoke together also about the matter; and Hjalte said, "I will go to the king if ye like; for I am not a man of Norway, and the Swedes can have nothing to say to me. I have heard that there are Iceland men in the king's house who are my acquaintances, and are well treated; namely, the skalds Gissur Black and Ottar Black. From them I shall get out what I can about the Swedish king; and if the business will really be so difficult as it now appears, or if there be any other way of promoting it, I can easily devise some errand that may appear suitable for me."

This counsel appeared to Bjorn and Ingebjorg to be the wisest, and they resolved upon it among themselves. Ingebjorg put Hjalte in a position to travel; gave him two Gautland men with him, and ordered them to follow him, and assist him with their service, and also to go wherever he might have occasion to send them. Besides, Ingebjorg gave him twenty marks of weighed silver money for travelling expenses, and sent word and token by him to the Swedish king Olaf's daughter, Ingegerd, that she should give all her assistance to Hjalte's business, whenever he should find himself under the necessity of craving her help. Hjalte set off as soon as he was ready. When he came to King Olaf he soon found the skalds Gissur and Ottar, and they were very glad at his coming. Without delay they went to the king, and told him that a man was come who was their countryman, and one of the most considerable in their native land, and requested the

king to receive him well. The king told them to take Hjalte and his fellow-travellers into their company and quarters. Now when Hjalte had resided there a short time, and got acquainted with people, he was much respected by everybody. The skalds were often in the king's house, for they were well-spoken men; and often in the daytime they sat in front of the king's high-seat, and Hjalte, to whom they paid the highest respect in all things, by their side. He became thus known to the king, who willingly entered into conversation with him, and heard from him news about Iceland.

70.—OF SIGVAT THE SKALD.

It happened that before Bjorn set out from home he asked Sigvat the skald, who at that time was with King Olaf, to accompany him on his journey. It was a journey for which people had no great inclination. There was, however, great friendship between Bjorn and Sigvat. Then Sigvat sang:—

"With the king's marshals all have I,
In days gone by,
Lived joyously,—
With all who on the king attend,
And knee before him humbly bend,
Bjorn, thou oft hast ta'en my part—
Pleaded with art,
And touched the heart.
Bjorn! brave stainer of the sword,
Thou art my friend—I trust thy word."

While they were riding up to Gautland, Sigvat made these verses:—

"Down the Fjord sweep wind and rain,
Our stout ship's sails and tackle strain;
Wet to the skin,
We're sound within,
And gaily o'er the waves are dancing,
Our sea-steed o'er the waves high prancing!
Through Lister sea
Flying all free;
Off from the wind with swelling sail,
We merrily scud before the gale,
And reach the sound
Where we were bound.
And now our ship, so gay and grand,
Glides past the green and lovely land,
And at the isle
Moors for a while.
Our horse-hoofs now leave hasty print;
We ride—of ease there's scanty stint—
In heat and haste
O'er Gautland's waste:
Though in a hurry to be married,
The king can't say that we have tarried."

One evening late they were riding through Gautland, and Sigvat made these verses:—

"The weary horse will at nightfall
Gallop right well to reach his stall;
When night meets day, with hasty hoof
He plies the road to reach a roof.
Far from the Danes, we now may ride
Safely by stream or mountain-side;
But, in this twilight, in some ditch
The horse and rider both may pitch."

They rode through the merchant town of Skara, and down the street to the earl's house. He sang:—

"The shy sweet girls, from window high,
In wonder peep at the sparks that fly
From our horses' heels, as down the street
Of the earl's town we ride so fleet.
Spur on!—that every pretty lass
May hear our horse-hoofs as we pass
Clatter upon the stones so hard,
And echo round the paved court-yard."

71.—HJALTE SKEGGJASON WHILE HE WAS IN SVITHIOD.

One day Hjalte, and the skalds with him, went before the king, and he began thus:—"It has so happened, king, as is known to you, that I have come here after a long and difficult journey; but when I had once crossed the ocean and heard of your greatness, it appeared to me unwise to go back without having seen you in your splendour and glory. Now it is a law between Iceland and Norway, that Iceland men pay landing due when they come into Norway, but while I was coming across the sea I took myself all the landing dues from my ship's people; but knowing that you have the greatest right to all the power in Norway, I hastened hither to deliver to you the landing dues." With this he showed the silver to the king, and laid ten marks of silver in Gissur Black's lap.

The king replies, "Few have brought us any such dues from Norway for some time; and now, Hjalte, I will return you my warmest thanks for having given yourself so much trouble to bring us the landing dues, rather than

pay them to our enemies. But I will that thou shouldst take this money from me as a gift, and with it my friendship."

Hjalte thanked the king with many words, and from that day set himself in great favour with the king, and often spoke with him; for the king thought, what was true, that he was a man of much understanding and eloquence. Now Hjalte told Gissur and Ottar that he was sent with tokens to the king's daughter Ingegerd, to obtain her protection and friendship; and he begged of them to procure him some opportunity to speak with her. They answered, that this was an easy thing to do; and went one day to her house, where she sat at the drinking table with many men. She received the skalds in a friendly manner, for they were known to her. Hjalte brought her a salutation from the earl's wife, Ingebjorg; and said she had sent him here to obtain friendly help and succour from her, and in proof whereof produced his tokens. The king's daughter received him also kindly, and said he should be welcome to her friendship. They sat there till late in the day drinking. The king's daughter made Hjalte tell her much news, and invited him to come often and converse with her. He did so: came there often, and spoke with the king's daughter; and at last entrusted her with the purpose of Bjorn's and his comrade's journey, and asked her how she thought the Swedish king would receive the proposal that there should be a reconciliation between the kings. The king's daughter replied, that, in her opinion, it would be a useless attempt to propose to the king any reconciliation with Olaf the Thick; for the king was so enraged against him, that he would not suffer his name to

be mentioned before him. It happened one day that Hjalte was sitting with the king and talking to him, and the king was very merry and drunk. Then Hjalte said, "Manifold splendour and grandeur have I seen here; and I have now witnessed with my eyes what I have often heard of, that no monarch in the north is so magnificent: but it is very vexatious that we who come so far to visit it have a road so long and troublesome, both on account of the great ocean, but more especially because it is not safe to travel through Norway for those who are coming here in a friendly disposition. But why is there no one to bring proposals for a peace between you and King Olaf the Thick? I heard much in Norway, and in West Gautland, of the general desire that this peace should have taken place; and it has been told me for truth, as the Norway king's words, that he earnestly desires to be reconciled to you; and the reason I know is, that he feels how much less his power is than yours. It is even said that he intends to pay his court to your daughter Ingegerd; and that would lead to a useful peace, for I have heard from people of credit that he is a remarkably distinguished man."

The king answers, "Thou must not speak thus, Hjalte; but for this time I will not take it amiss of thee, as thou dost not know what people have to avoid here. That fat fellow shall not be called king in my court, and there is by no means the stuff in him that people talk of: and thou must see thyself that such a connection is not suitable; for I am the tenth king in Upsala who, relation after relation, has been sole monarch over the Swedish, and many

other great lands, and all have been the superior kings over other kings in the northern countries. But Norway is little inhabited, and the inhabitants are scattered. There have only been small kings there; and although Harald Harfager was the greatest king in that country, and strove against the small kings, and subdued them, yet he knew so well his position that he did not covet the Swedish dominions, and therefore the Swedish kings let him sit in peace, especially as there was relationship between them. Thereafter, while Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was in Norway he sat in peace, until he began to maraud in Gautland and Denmark; on which a war-force came upon him, and took from him both life and land. Gunhild's sons also were cut off when they became disobedient to the Danish kings; and Harald Gormson joined Norway to his own dominions, and made it subject to scat to him. And we reckon Harald Gormson to be of less power and consideration than the Upsala kings, for our relation Styrbjorn subdued him, and Harald became his man; and yet Eirik the Victorious, my father, rose over Styrbjorn's head when it came to a trial between them. When Olaf Trygvason came to Norway and proclaimed himself king, we would not permit it, but we went with King Svein, and cut him off; and thus we have appropriated Norway, as thou hast not heard, and with no less right than if I had gained it in battle, and by conquering the kings who ruled it before. Now thou canst well suppose, as a man of sense, that I will not let slip the kingdom of Norway for this thick fellow. It is wonderful he does not remember how narrowly he made his escape, when we had penned him in

in the Malar lake. Although he slipped away with life from thence, he ought, methinks, to have something else in his mind than to hold out against us Swedes. Now, Hjalte, thou must never again open thy mouth in my presence on such a subject."

Hjalte saw sufficiently that there was no hope of the king's listening to any proposal of a peace, and desisted from speaking of it, and turned the conversation to something else. When Hjalte, afterwards, came into discourse with the king's daughter Ingegerd, he tells her his conversation with the king. She told him she expected such an answer from the king. Hjalte begged of her to say a good word to the king about the matter, but she thought the king would listen as little to what she said: "But speak about it I will, if thou requirest it." Hjalte assured her he would be thankful for the attempt. One day the king's daughter Ingegerd had a conversation with her father Olaf; and as she found her father was in a particularly good humour, she said, "What is now thy intention with regard to the strife with Olaf the Thick? There are many who complain about it, having lost their property by it; others have lost their relations by the Northmen, and all their peace and quiet; so that none of your men see any harm that can be done to Norway. It would be a bad counsel if thou sought the dominion over Norway; for it is a poor country, difficult to come at, and the people dangerous: for the men there will rather have any other for their king than thee. If I might advise, thou wouldst let go all thoughts about Norway, and not desire Olaf's heritage; and rather turn thyself to the kingdoms in the

East country, which thy forefathers the former Swedish kings had, and which our relation Styrbjorn lately subdued, and let the thick Olaf possess the heritage of his forefathers and make peace with him."

The king replies in a rage, "It is thy counsel, Ingegerd, that I should let slip the kingdom of Norway, and give thee in marraige to this thick Olaf.—No," says he, "something else shall first take place. Rather than that, I shall, at the Upsala Thing in winter, issue a proclamation to all Swedes, that the whole people shall assemble for an expedition, and go to their ships before the ice is off the waters; and I will proceed to Norway, and lay waste the land with fire and sword, and burn everything, to punish them for their want of fidelity."

The king was so mad with rage that nobody ventured to say a word, and she went away. Hjalte, who was watching for her, immediately went to her, and asked how her errand to the king had turned out. She answered, it turned out as she had expected; that none could venture to put in a word with the king; but, on the contrary, he had used threats; and she begged Hjalte never to speak of the matter again before the king. As Hjalte and Ingegerd spoke together often, Olaf the Thick was often the subject, and he told her about him and his manners; and Hjalte praised the king of Norway what he could, but said no more than was the truth, and she could well perceive it. Once, in a conversation, Hjalte said to her, "May I be permitted, daughter of the king, to tell thee what lies in my mind?"

"Speak freely," says she; "but so that I alone can hear it."

TREACHERY OF THE UPLAND KINGS.

the king who at that time ruled in Rau- of this, he thought it was a very bad affair; came men to him, both great and small, who at was doing. Therefore this king re- up to Hedemark, and consult King Hrorek, most eminent for understanding of the kings time were in the country. Now when these with each other, they agreed to send a message he valley-king north in the Gudbrandsdal, and the king who was in Hadaland, and bid them Hedemark, to meet Hrorek and the other kings ey did not spare their travelling; for five kings demark, at a place called Ringsaker. Ring, ek's brother, was the fifth of these kings. The first a private conference together, in which he from Raumarike first took up the word, and ing Olaf's proceedings, and of the disturbance causing both by killing and mutilating people. drove out of the country, some he deprived of ces or property if they spoke anything against nd, besides, he was travelling over the country with army, not with the number of people fixed by law royal progress in guest-quarters. He added, that fled hither upon account of this disturbance, and powerful people with him had fled from their udal ties in Raumarike. "But although as yet the evil rest to us, it will be but a short time before ye will be exposed to it; therefore it is best that we all con- together what resolution we shall take." When he

had ended his speech, Hrorek was desired to speak; and he said, "Now is the day come that I foretold when we had had our meeting at Hadaland, and ye were all so eager to raise Olaf over our heads; namely, that as soon as he was the supreme master of the country we would find it hard to hold him by the horns. We have but two things now to do: the one is, to go all of us to him, and let him do with us as he likes, which I think is the best thing we can do; or the other is, to rise against him before he has gone farther through the country. Although he has 300 or 400 men, that is not too great a force for us to meet, if we are only all in movement together: but, in general, there is less success and advantage to be gained when several of equal strength are joined together, than when one alone stands at the head of his own force; therefore it is my advice, that we do not venture to try our luck against Olaf Haraldson."

Thereafter each of the kings spoke according to his own mind, some dissuading from going out against King Olaf, others urging it; and no determination was come to, as each had his own reasons to produce.

Then Gudrod, the valley-king, took up the word, and spoke:—"It appears wonderful to me, that ye make such a long roundabout in coming to a resolution; and probably ye are frightened for him. We are here five kings, and none of less high birth than Olaf. We gave him the strength to fight with Earl Svein, and with our forces he has brought the country under his power. But if he grudges each of us the little kingdom he had before, and threatens us with tortures, or gives us ill words, then,

say I for myself, that I will withdraw myself from the king's slavery; and I do not call him a man among you who is afraid to cut him off, if he come into your hands here up in Hedemark. And this I can tell you, that we shall never bear our heads in safety while Olaf is in life." After this encouragement they all agreed to his determination.

Then said Hrorek, "With regard to this determination, it appears to me necessary to make our agreement so strong that no one shall fail in his promise to the other. Therefore, if ye determine upon attacking Olaf at a fixed time, when he comes here to Hedemark, I will not trust much to you if some are north in the valleys, others up in Hedemark; but if our resolution is to come to anything, we must remain here assembled together day and night."

This the kings agreed to, and kept themselves there all assembled, ordering a feast to be provided for them at Ringsaker, and drank there a cup to success; sending out spies to Raumarike, and when one set came in sending out others, so that day and night they had intelligence of Olaf's proceedings, and of the numbers of his men. King Olaf went about in Raumarike in guest-quarters, and altogether in the way before related; but as the provision of the guest-quarter was not always sufficient, upon account of his numerous followers, he laid it upon the bondes to give additional contributions wherever he found it necessary to stay. In some places he stayed longer, in others, shorter than was fixed; and his journey down to the lake Miosen was shorter than had been fixed on. The kings, after taking their resolution, sent out message-

tokens, and summoned all the lendermen and powerful bondes from all the districts thereabout; and when they had assembled the kings had a private meeting with them, and made their determination known, setting a day for gathering together and carrying it into effect; and it was settled among them that each of the kings should have 300 (=360) men. Then they sent away the lendermen to gather the people, and meet all at the appointed place. The most approved of the measure; but it happened here, as it usually does, that every one has some friend even among his enemies.

74.—MUTILATING OF THE UPLAND KINGS.

Ketil of Ringanes was at this meeting. Now when he came home in the evening he took his supper, put on his clothes, and went down with his house-servants to the lake; took a light vessel which he had, the same that King Olaf had made him a present of, and launched it on the water. They found in the boat-house everything ready to their hands; betook themselves to their oars, and rowed out into the lake. Ketil had forty well-armed men with him, and came early in the morning to the end of the lake. He set off immediately with twenty men, leaving the other twenty to look after the ship. King Olaf was at that time at Eid, in the upper end of Raumarike. Thither Ketil arrived just as the king was coming from matins. The king received Ketil kindly. He said he must speak with the king in all haste; and they had a private conference together. There Ketil tells the king the resolution which the kings had taken, and their

agreement, which he had come to the certain knowledge of. When the king learnt this he called his people together, and sent some out to collect riding-horses in the country; others he sent down to the lake to take all the rowing-vessels they could lay hold of, and keep them for his use. Thereafter he went to the church, had mass sung before him, and then sat down to table. After his meal he got ready, and hastened down to the lake, where the vessels were coming to meet him. He himself went on board the light vessel, and as many men with him as it could stow, and all the rest of his followers took such boats as they could get hold of; and when it was getting late in the evening they set out from the land, in still and calm weather. He rowed up the water with 400 men, and came with them to Ringsaker before day dawned; and the watchmen were not aware of the army before they were come into the very court. Ketil knew well in what houses the kings slept, and the king had all these houses surrounded and guarded, so that nobody could get out; and so they stood till daylight. The kings had not people enough to make resistance, but were all taken prisoners, and led before the king. Hrorek was an able but obstinate man, whose fidelity the king could not trust to if he made peace with him; therefore he ordered both his eyes to be punched out, and took him in that condition about with him. He ordered Gudrod's tongue to be cut out; but Ring and two others he banished from Norway, under oath never to return. Of the lendermen and bondes who had actually taken part in the traitorous design, some he drove out of the country, some he mu-

tilated, and with others he made peace. Ottar Black tells of this:—

"The giver of rings of gold,
The army leader bold,
 In vengeance springs
 On the Hedemark kings.
Olaf, the bold and great,
Repays their foul deceit—
 In full repays
 Their treacherous ways.
He drives with steel-clad hand
The small kings from the land,—
 Greater by far
 In deed of war.

The king who dwelt most north
Tongueless must wander forth:
 All fly away
 In great dismay.
King Olaf now rules o'er
What five kings ruled before..
 To Eid's old bound
 Extends his ground.
No king in days of yore
E'er won so much before:
 That this is so
 All Norsemen know."

King Olaf took possession of the land these five kings had possessed, and took hostages from the lendermen and bondes in it. He took money instead of guest-quarters from the country north of the valley district, and from Hedemark; and then returned to Raumarike, and so west to Hadaland. This winter (1018) his stepfather Sigurd Syr died; and King Olaf went to Ringerike, where his mother Asta made a great feast for him. Olaf alone bore the title of king now in Norway.

75.—KING OLAF'S HALF-BROTHERS.

It is told that when King Olaf was on his visit to his mother Asta, she brought out her children, and showed them to him. The king took his brother Guthorm on the one knee, and his brother Halfdan on the other. The king looked at Guthorm, made a wry face, and pretended to be angry at them; at which the boys were afraid. Then Asta brought her youngest son, called Harald, who was three years old, to him. The king made a wry face at him also; but he looked the king in the face without regarding it. The king took the boy by the hair, and plucked it; but the boy seized the king's whiskers,



KING OLAF AND HIS DOG VIGE

(From a painting by Knut Ekwall.)

KING Olaf possessed two valuable aids, one of which was a horse of great strength and swiftness, the other a sheep-herd-dog of extraordinary sagacity and faithfulness. The latter he obtained from a peasant as a reward for restoring a herd of cows which Olaf's forces captured in a foray in Ireland. This dog proved himself valorous as well as faithful and on more than one occasion carried consternation into the ranks of the King's enemies, who seem to have regarded the animal superstitiously. So affectionately was this dog, called Vige, attached to King Olaf, that when he learned of his master's death it is said the poor animal shed tears and repairing to a funeral mound refused every temptation to remove therefrom and there remained whining his wail of broken-hearted distress until he died.

See page 108.

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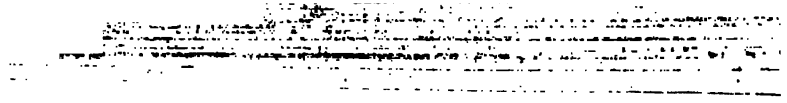
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 That this is so
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and gave them a tug. "Then," said the king, "thou wilt be revengeful, my friend, some day." The following day the king was walking with his mother about the farm, and they came to a playground, where Asta's sons, Guthorm and Halfdan, were amusing themselves. They were building great houses and barns in their play, and were supposing them full of cattle and sheep; and close beside them, in a clay pool, Harald was busy with chips of wood, sailing them in his sport along the edge. The king asked him what these were; and he answered, these were his ships of war. The king laughed, and said, "The time may come, friend, when thou wilt command ships."

Then the king called to him Halfdan and Guthorm; and first he asked Guthorm, "What wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Corn land," replied he.

"And how great wouldst thou like thy corn land to be?"

"I would have the whole ness that goes out into the lake sown with corn every summer." On that ness there are ten farms.

The king replies, "There would be a great deal of corn there." And, turning to Halfdan, he asked, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Cows," he replied.

"How many wouldst thou like to have?"

"When they went to the lake to be watered I would have so many, that they stood as tight round the lake as they could stand."

"That would be a great housekeeping," said the king; "and therein ye take after your father."

Then the king says to Harald, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"House-servants."

"And how many wouldst thou have?"

"Oh! so many I would like to have as would eat up my brother Halfdan's cows at a single meal."

The king laughed, and said to Asta, "Here, mother, thou art bringing up a king." And more is not related of them on this occasion.

76.—THE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY.

In Svithjod it was the old custom, as long as heathenism prevailed, that the chief sacrifice took place in Goe month at Upsala. Then sacrifice was offered for peace, and victory to the king; and thither came people from all parts of Svithjod. All the Things of the Swedes, also, were held there, and markets, and meetings for buying, which continued for a week: and after Christianity was introduced into Svithjod, the Things and fairs were held there as before. After Christianity had taken root in Svithjod, and the kings would no longer dwell in Upsala, the market-time was moved to Candlemas, and it has since continued so, and it lasts only three days. There is then the Swedish Thing also, and people from all quarters come there. Svithjod is divided into many parts. One part is West Gautland, Vermaland, and the Marks, with what belongs to them; and this part of the kingdom is so large, that the bishop who is set over it has

1100 churches under him. The other part is East Gautland, where there is also a bishop's seat, to which the islands of Gotland and Eyland belong; and forming all together a still greater bishopric. In Svithjod itself there is a part of the country called Sudermanland, where there is also a bishopric. Then comes Westmanland, or Fiathrundaland, which is also a bishopric. The third portion of Svithjod proper is called Tiundaland; the fourth Attandaland; the fifth Sialand, and what belongs to it lies eastward along the coast. Tiundaland is the best and most inhabited part of Svithjod, under which the other kingdoms stand. There Upsala is situated, the seat of the king and archbishop; and from it Upsala-*audr,* or the domain of the Swedish kings, takes its name. Each of these divisions of the country has its Lag-thing, and its own laws in many parts. Over each is a lagman, who rules principally in affairs of the bondes; for that becomes law which he, by his speech, determines them to make law: and if king, earl, or bishop goes through the country, and holds a Thing with the bondes, the lagmen reply on account of the bondes, and they all follow their lagmen; so that even the most powerful men scarcely dare to come to their Al-thing without regarding the bondes' and lagmen's law. And in all matters in which the laws differ from each other, Upsala-law is the directing law; and the other lagmen are under the lagman who dwells in Tiundaland.

77.—OF THE LAGMAN THORGNY.

In Tiundaland there was a lagman who was called Thorgny, whose father was called Thorgny Thorgny-

son. His forefathers had for a long course of years, and during many kings' times, been lagmen of Tiunda-land. At this time Thorgny was old, and had a great court about him. He was considered one of the wisest men in Sweden, and was Earl Ragnvald's relation and foster-father.

78.—MEETING OF RAGNVALD AND INGEGERD.

Now we must go back in our story to the time when the men whom the king's daughter Ingegerd and Hjalte had sent from the east came to Earl Ragnvald. They relate their errand to the earl and his wife Ingebjorg, and tell how the king's daughter had oft spoken to the Swedish king about a peace between him and King Olaf the Thick, and that she was a great friend of King Olaf; but that the Swedish king flew into a passion every time she named Olaf, so that she had no hopes of any peace. The Earl told Bjorn the news he had received from the east; but Bjorn gave the same reply, that he would not turn back until he had met the Swedish king, and said the earl had promised to go with him. Now the winter was passing fast, and immediately after Yule the earl made himself ready to travel with sixty men, among whom were the marshal Bjorn and his companions. The earl proceeded eastward all the way to Svithjod; but when he came a little way into the country he sent his men before him to Upsala with a message to Ingegerd the king's daughter to come out to meet him at Ullaraker, where she had a large farm. When the king's daughter got the earl's message she made herself ready immediately to

travel with a large attendance, and Hjalte accompanied her. But before he took his departure he went to King Olaf, and said, "Continue always to be the most fortunate of monarchs! Such splendour as I have seen about thee I have in truth never witnessed elsewhere, and wheresoever I come it shall not be concealed. Now, king, may I entreat thy favour and friendship in time to come?"

The king replies, "Why art thou in so great a haste, and where art thou going?"

Hjalte replies, "I am to ride out to Ullaraker with Ingegerd thy daughter."

The king says, "Farewell, then: a man thou art of understanding and politeness, and well suited to live with people of rank."

Thereupon Hjalte withdrew.

The king's daughter Ingegerd rode to her farm in Ullaraker, and ordered a great feast to be prepared for the earl. When the earl arrived he was welcomed with gladness, and he remained there several days. The earl and the king's daughter talked much, and of many things, but most about the Swedish and Norwegian kings; and she told the earl that in her opinion there was no hope of peace between them.

Then said the earl, "How wouldst thou like it, my cousin, if Olaf king of Norway were to pay his addresses to thee? It appears to us that it would contribute most towards a settled peace if there was relationship established between the kings; but I would not support such a matter if it were against thy inclination."

She replies, "My father disposes of my hand; but among all my other relations thou art he whose advice I would rather follow in weighty affairs. Dost thou think it would be advisable?" The earl recommended it to her strongly, and reckoned up many excellent achievements of King Olaf's. He told her, in particular, about what had lately been done; that King Olaf in an hour's time one morning had taken five kings prisoners, deprived them all of their governments, and laid their kingdoms and properties under his own power. Much they talked about the business, and in all their conversations they perfectly agreed with each other. When the earl was ready he took leave, and proceeded on his way, taking Hjalte with him.

79.—RAGNVALD AND THORGNY.

Earl Ragnvald came towards evening one day to the house of Lagman Thorgny. It was a great and stately mansion, and many people stood outside, who received the earl kindly, and took care of the horses and baggage. The earl went into the room, where there was a number of people. In the high-seat sat an old man; and never had Bjorn or his companions seen a man so stout. His beard was so long that it lay upon his knee, and was spread over his whole breast; and the man, moreover, was handsome and stately in appearance. The earl went forward and saluted him. Thorgny received him joyfully and kindly, and bade him go to the seat he was accustomed to take. The earl seated himself on the other side, opposite Thorgny. They remained there some days before the earl disclosed his errand, and then he asked

Thorgny to go with him into the conversing room. Bjorn and his followers went there with the earl. Then the earl began, and told how Olaf king of Norway had sent these men hither to conclude a peaceful agreement. He showed at great length what injury it was of to the West Gautland people, that there was hostility between their country and Norway. He further related that Olaf the king of Norway had sent ambassadors, who were here present, and to whom he had promised he would attend them to the Swedish king; but he added, "The Swedish king takes the matter so grievously, that he has uttered menaces against those who entertain it. Now so it is, my foster-father, that I do not trust to myself in this matter; but am come on a visit to thee to get good counsel and help from thee in the matter."

Now when the earl had done speaking Thorgny sat silent for a while, and then took up the word. "Ye have curious dispositions who are so ambitious of honour and renown, and yet have no prudence or counsel in you when you get into any mischief. Why did you not consider, before you gave your promise to this adventure, that you had no power to stand against King Olaf? In my opinion it is not a less honourable condition to be in the number of bondes, and have one's words free, and be able to say what one will, even if the king be present. But I must go to the Upsala Thing, and give thee such help that without fear thou canst speak before the king what thou findest good."

The earl thanked him for the promise, remained with Thorgny, and rode with him to the Upsala Thing. There

was a great assemblage of people at the Thing, and King Olaf was there with his court.

80.—OF THE UPSALA THING.

The first day the Thing sat, King Olaf was seated on a stool, and his court stood in a circle around him. Right opposite to him sat Earl Ragnvald and Thorgny in the Thing upon one stool, and before them the earl's court and Thorgny's house-people. Behind their stool stood the bonde community, all in a circle around them. Some stood upon hillocks and heights, in order to hear the better. Now when the king's messages, which are usually handled in the Things, were produced and settled, the marshal Bjorn rose beside the earl's stool, and said aloud, "King Olaf sends me here with the message that he will offer to the Swedish king peace, and the frontiers that in old times were fixed between Norway and Svithjod." He spoke so loud that the Swedish king could distinctly hear him; but at first, when he heard King Olaf's name spoken, he thought the speaker had some message or business of his own to execute; but when he heard of peace, and the frontiers between Norway and Svithjod, he saw from what root it came, and sprang up, and called out that the man should be silent, for that such speeches were useless. Thereupon Bjorn sat down; and when the noise had ceased Earl Ragnvald stood up and made a speech.

He spoke of Olaf the Thick's message, and proposal of peace to Olaf the Swedish king; and that all the West Gautland people sent their entreaty to Olaf that he would make peace with the king of Norway. He recounted all

the evils the West Gautlanders were suffering under; that they must go without all the things from Norway which were necessary in their households; and, on the other hand, were exposed to attack and hostility whenever the king of Norway gathered an army and made an inroad on them. The earl added, that Olaf the Norway king had sent men hither with the intent to obtain Ingegerd the king's daughter in marriage.

When the earl had done speaking Olaf the Swedish king stood up and replied, and was altogether against listening to any proposals of peace, and made many and heavy reproaches against the earl for his impudence in entering into a peaceful truce with the thick fellow, and making up a peaceful friendship with him, and which in truth he considered treason against himself. He added, that it would be well deserved if Earl Ragnvald were driven out of the kingdom. The earl had, in his opinion, the influence of his wife Ingebjorg to thank for what might happen; and it was the most imprudent fancy he could have fallen upon to take up with such a wife. The king spoke long and bitterly, turning his speech always against Olaf the Thick. When he sat down not a sound was to be heard at first.

81.—THORGNY'S SPEECH.

Then Thorgny stood up; and when he arose all the bondes stood up who had before been sitting, and rushed together from all parts to listen to what Lagman Thorgny would say. At first there was a great din of people and weapons; but when the noise was settled into silent lis-

tening, Thorgny made his speech. "The disposition of Swedish kings is different now from what it has been formerly. My grandfather Thorgny could well remember the Upsala king Eirik Eymundson, and used to say of him that when he was in his best years he went out every summer on expeditions to different countries, and conquered for himself Finland, Kirjalaland, Courland, Esthonia, and the eastern countries all around; and at the present day the earth-bulwarks, ramparts, and other great works which he made are to be seen. And, moreover, he was not so proud that he would not listen to people who had anything to say to him. My father, again, was a long time with King Bjorn, and was well acquainted with his ways and manners. In Bjorn's lifetime his kingdom stood in great power, and no kind of want was felt, and he was gay and sociable with his friends. I also remember King Eirik the Victorious, and was with him on many a war-expedition. He enlarged the Swedish dominion, and defended it manfully; and it was also easy and agreeable to communicate our opinions to him. But the king we have now got allows no man to presume to talk with him, unless it be what he desires to hear. On this alone he applies all his power, while he allows his scat-lands in other countries to go from him through laziness and weakness. He wants to have the Norway kingdom laid under him, which no Swedish king before him ever desired, and therewith brings war and distress on many a man. Now it is our will, we bondes, that thou King Olaf make peace with the Norway king, Olaf the Thick, and marry thy daugh-

ter Ingegerd to him. Wilt thou, however, reconquer the kingdoms in the east countries which thy relations and forefathers had there, we will all for that purpose follow thee to the war. But if thou wilt not do as we desire, we will now attack thee, and put thee to death; for we will no longer suffer law and peace to be disturbed. So our forefathers went to work when they drowned five kings in a morass at the Mula-thing, and they were filled with the same insupportable pride thou hast shown towards us. Now tell us, in all haste, what resolution thou wilt take." Then the whole public approved, with clash of arms and shouts, the lagman's speech.

The king stands up and says he will let things go according to the desire of the bondes. "All Swedish kings," he said, "have done so, and have allowed the bondes to rule in all according to their will." The murmur among the bondes then came to an end; and the chiefs, the king, the earl, and Thorgny talked together, and concluded a truce and reconciliation, on the part of the Swedish king, according to the terms which the king of Norway had proposed by his ambassadors; and it was resolved at the Thing that Ingegerd, the king's daughter, should be married to Olaf Haraldson. The king left it to the earl to make the contract feast, and gave him full powers to conclude this marriage affair; and after this was settled at the Thing, they separated. When the earl returned homewards, he and the king's daughter Ingegerd had a meeting, at which they talked between themselves over this matter. She sent Olaf a long cloak of fine linen richly embroidered with gold, and with silk points. The earl

returned to Gautland, and Bjorn with him; and after staying with him a short time, Bjorn and his company returned to Norway. When he came to King Olaf he told him the result of his errand, and the king returned him many thanks for his conduct, and said Bjorn had had great success in bringing his errand to so favourable a conclusion against such animosity.

82.—OF KING HROREK'S TREACHERY.

On the approach of spring (1018) King Olaf went down to the coast, had his ships rigged out, summoned troops to him, and proceeded in spring out from Viken to the Naze, and so north to Hordaland. He then sent messages to all the lendermen, selected the most considerable men in each district, and made the most splendid preparations to meet his bride. The wedding-feast was to be in autumn, at the Gaut river, on the frontiers of the two countries. King Olaf had with him the blind king Hrorek. When his wound was healed, the king gave him two men to serve him, let him sit in the high-seat by his side, and kept him in meat and clothes in no respect worse than he had kept himself before. Hrorek was taciturn, and answered short and cross when any one spoke to him. It was his custom to make his footboy, when he went out in the daytime, lead him away from people, and then to beat the lad until he ran away. He would then complain to King Olaf that the lad would not serve him. The king changed his servants, but it was as before; no servant would hold it out with King Hrorek. Then the king appointed a man called Svein to wait upon and serve King Hrorek. He was Hrorek's relation, and

had formerly been in his service. Hrorek continued with his habits of moroseness, and of solitary walks; but when he and Svein were alone together, he was merry and talkative. He used to bring up many things which had happened in former days when he was king. He alluded, too, to the man who had, in his former days, torn him from his kingdom and happiness, and made him live on alms. "It is hardest of all," says he, "that thou and my other relations, who ought to be men of bravery, are so degenerated that thou wilt not avenge the shame and disgrace brought upon our race." Such discourse he often brought out. Svein said, they had too great a power to deal with, while they themselves had but little means. Hrorek said, "Why should we live longer as mutilated men with disgrace? I, a blind man, may conquer them as well as they conquered me when I was asleep. Come then, let us kill this thick Olaf. He is not afraid for himself at present. I will lay the plan, and would not spare my hands if I could use them, but that I cannot by reason of my blindness; therefore thou must use the weapons against him, and as soon as Olaf is killed I can see well enough that his power must come into the hands of his enemies, and it may well be that I shall be king, and thou shalt be my earl." So much persuasion he used that Svein at last agreed to join in the deed. The plan was so laid that when the king was ready to go to vespers, Svein stood on the threshold with a drawn dagger under his cloak. Now when the king came out of the room, it so happened that he walked quicker than Svein expected; and when he looked the king in the face he grew pale, and

then white as a corpse, and his hand sank down. The king observed his terror, and said, "What is this, Svein? Wilt thou betray me?" Svein threw down his cloak and dagger, and fell at the king's feet, saying, "All is in God's hands and thine, king!" The king ordered his men to seize Svein, and he was put in irons. The king ordered Hrorek's seat to be moved to another bench. He gave Svein his life, and he left the country. The king appointed a different lodging for Hrorek to sleep in from that in which he slept himself, and in which many of his court-people slept. He set two of his court-men, who had been long with him, and whose fidelity he had proof of, to attend Hrorek day and night; but it is not said whether they were people of high birth or not. King Hrorek's mood was very different at different times. Sometimes he would sit silent for days together, so that no man could get a word out of him; and sometimes he was so merry and gay, that people found a joke in every word he said. Sometimes his words were very bitter. He was sometimes in a mood that he would drink them all under the benches, and made all his neighbours drunk; but in general he drank but little. King Olaf gave him plenty of pocket-money. When he went to his lodgings he would often, before going to bed, have some stoups of mead brought in, which he gave to all the men in the house to drink, so that he was much liked.

83.—OF LITTLE FIN.

There was a man from the Uplands called Fin the Little, and some said of him that he was of Finnish[1] race.

[1]The Laplanders are called Fins in Norway and Sweden.—L.

He was a remarkable little man, but so swift of foot that no horse could overtake him. He was a particularly well-exercised runner with snow-shoes, and shooter with the bow. He had long been in the service of King Hrorek, and often employed in errands of trust. He knew the roads in all the Upland hills, and was well known to all the great people. Now when King Hrorek was set under guards on the journey Fin would often slip in among the men of the guard, and followed, in general, with the lads and serving-men; but as often as he could he waited upon Hrorek, and entered into conversation with him. The king, however, only spoke a word or two with him at a time, to prevent suspicion. In spring, when they came a little way beyond Viken, Fin disappeared from the army for some days, but came back, and stayed with them a while. This happened often, without any one observing it particularly; for there were many such hangers-on with the army.

84.—MURDER OF OLAF'S COURT-MEN.

King Olaf came to Tunsberg before Easter (1018), and remained there late in spring. Many merchant vessels came to the town, both from Saxon-land and Denmark, and from Viken, and from the north parts of the country. There was a great assemblage of people; and as the times were good, there was many a drinking meeting. It happened one evening that King Hrorek came rather late to his lodging; and as he had drunk a great deal, he was remarkably merry. Little Fin came to him

with a stoup of mead with herbs in it, and very strong. The king made every one in the house drunk, until they fell asleep each in his berth. Fin had gone away, and a light was burning in the lodging. Hrorek waked the men who usually followed him, and told them he wanted to go out into the yard. They had a lantern with them, for outside it was pitch dark. Out in the yard there was a large privy standing upon pillars, and a stair to go up to it. While Hrorek and his guards were in the yard they heard a man say, "Cut down that devil;" and presently a crash, as if somebody fell. Hrorek said, "These fellows must be dead drunk to be fighting with each other so: run and separate them." They rushed out; but when they came out upon the steps both of them were killed: the man who went out the last was the first killed. There were twelve of Hrorek's men there, and among them Sigurd Hit, who had been his banner-man, and also little Fin. They drew the dead bodies up between the houses, took the king with them, ran out to a boat they had in readiness, and rowed away. Sigvat the skald slept in King Olaf's lodgings. He got up in the night, and his footboy with him, and went to the privy. But as they were returning, on going down the stairs Sigvat's foot slipped, and he fell on his knee; and when he put out his hands he felt the stairs wet. "I think," said he, laughing, "the king must have given many of us tottering legs to-night." When they came into the house in which light was burning the footboy said, "Have you hurt yourself that you are all over so bloody?" He replied, "I am not wounded, but something must have hap-

pened here." Thereupon he wakened Thord Folason, who was standard-bearer, and his bedfellow. They went out with a light, and soon found the blood. They traced it, and found the corpses, and knew them. They saw also a great stump of a tree in which clearly a gash had been cut, which, as was afterwards known, had been done as a stratagem to entice those out who had been killed. Sigvat and Thord spoke together and agreed it was highly necessary to let the king know of this without delay. They immediately sent a lad to the lodging where Hrorek had been. All the men in it were asleep; but the king was gone. He wakened the men who were in the house, and told them what had happened. The men arose, and ran out to the yard where the bodies were; but, however needful it appeared to be that the king should know it, nobody dared to waken him.

Then said Sigvat to Thord, "What wilt thou rather do, comrade,—waken the king, or tell him the tidings?"

Thord replies, "I do not dare to waken him, and I would rather tell him the news."

Then said Sigvat, "There is much of the night still to pass, and before morning Hrorek may get himself concealed in such a way that it may be difficult to find him; but as yet he cannot be very far off, for the bodies are still warm. We must never let the disgrace rest upon us of concealing this treason from the king. Go thou, up to the lodging, and wait for me there."

Sigvat then went to the church, and told the bell-ringer to toll for the souls of the king's court-men, naming the men who were killed. The bell-ringer did as he

was told. The king awoke at the ringing, sat up in his bed, and asked if it was already the hours of matins.

Thord replies, "It is worse than that, for there has occurred a very important affair. Hrorek is fled, and two of the court-men are killed."

The king asked how this had taken place, and Thord told him all he knew. The king got up immediately, ordered to sound the call for a meeting of the court, and when the people were assembled he named men to go out to every quarter from the town, by sea and land, to search for Hrorek. Thorer Lange took a boat, and set off with thirty men; and when day dawned they saw two small boats before them in the channel, and when they saw each other both parties rowed as hard as they could. King Hrorek was there with thirty men. When they came quite close to each other Hrorek and his men turned towards the land, and all sprang on shore except the king, who sat on the aft seat. He bade them farewell, and wished they might meet each other again in better luck. At the same moment Thorer with his company rowed to the land. Fin the Little shot off an arrow, which hit Thorer in the middle of the body, and was his death; and Sigurd Hit, with his men, ran up into the forest. Thorer's men took his body, and transported it, together with Hrorek, to Tunsberg. King Olaf undertook himself thereafter to look after King Hrorek, made him be carefully guarded, and took good care of his treason, for which reason he had a watch over him night and day. King Hrorek thereafter was very gay, and nobody could observe but that he was in every way well satisfied.

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